Carthagena, Ohio

The Pope and the ordination of women

COMMONWEAL

$2.00 June 17, 1994

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CHRISTOPHER F. KOLLER on Health-care reform

EDWARD McGLYNN GAFFNEY, Jr., on Clinton's appointments

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WHO PAYS THE PRICE FOR FREE TRADE?

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WORKERS OF THE HEMISPHERE, UNITE!

Unions after NAFTA

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THE RIGHT WINS BIG
What's next for El Salvador?

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CORRESPONDENCE

Amen to McConnell

Philadelphia, Pa.

To the Editors: I don't know when an article has delighted me as much as did Frank McConnell's "Soothing Music" [May 6]. Someone surely has to let the hot air out of the New Age balloon. Meantime, my Episcopal church announces that it is about to take Matthew Fox into the fold. Help! (REV.) MICHAEL R. BECKER

From the editors: That's what you get for sending us all those Anglicans opposed to women's ordination.

Hey, thanks!

Kalamazoo, Mich.

To the Editors: Lawrence Cunningham's review of my book *The Making of a Mystic: Seasons in the Life of Teresa of Avila* ["Religious Booknotes," April 22] has made me happy. To be grouped with other authors of "wrongheaded books of this kind (e.g., Erikson's *Young Man Luther*)" is pleasure indeed. I gather that Dr. Cunningham regards Robert Coles as somewhat less "wrongheaded" in his biographical efforts than Erikson, but I am equally glad to be somehow in Coles's league as well. As for Cunningham's remark that my "odd ruminations act like jelly over a lens," I must confess that odd ruminations are the kind of thinking I have thirsted after for most of my life. I find myself thinking that a little jelly over a lens might provide a wonderful new way of looking at life. FRANCIS L. GROSS, JR.

Starving the spirit?

Oak Park, Ill.

To the Editors: In response to John Garvey's thoughtful May 20 column, "Breaking the Rules and Starving the Spirit" (ouch!) about my book, *Bending the Rules: What American Priests Tell American Catholics*, first, thanks for the careful reading. Garvey takes it all as seriously as I do.

Second, the priest who said we invite hate-filled people to Communion (so why not birth-controllers?) did not approve of the invitation, any more than Horace approved when Homer nodded. He was addressing the racism issue and urging equal time for contraceptionists. It's an old question: Why so adamant (and repetitive) on the second and not the first?

Third, as to the "priests manipulate symbols" remark. Very interesting, that; I'm glad Garvey picked up on it. It's a phenomenological view, spoken by a truly objective observer. Symbolic gestures make up much of a priest's service. Where would sacramentalism (even theology) be without them? Aquinas recognized their peculiar reality (spiritual vs. physical). The manipulation business is a good approach, if a bit matter-of-fact for some tastes.

As for the same priest's hoping to last until pension-vesting age, I like that one too. Hey, we're talking about ecclesiastical descendants of the old-time pastors in the baronial mode, "Dollar Dan" and his like. In any event, that pension won't buy much.

As for the bishop and "foolish" fasting laws, I hope the context makes it clear that the emphasis is on laws and in this case their application (enforcement? under pain of what?) which led common folk to sometimes ridiculous lengths. The laws fostered legalism and worry-wartism, especially among us naive literalists of the Anglo-Saxon tradition.

Those are items in rebuttal of Garvey's well-chosen details. A larger question has to do with his sensing softness in this rule-bending. Whatever happened to ascetic struggle? To repentance? To sin? Who now reads Claudel, Mauriac, Bernanos?

Interesting questions, maybe for another book. Or does this book at least imply or assume people struggling to do the right thing? The priests impressed Garvey (and me) as dedicated, hard-working, and devoted. I see them as practitioners who care about theory. I don't think they are soft on sin, except maybe hypocrisy.

JIM BOWMAN

Carlin echoes Limbaugh

Baton Rouge, La.

To the Editors: I knew that David R. Carlin, Jr., is quite often mean-spirited about those with whom he disagrees, but his column "Paying for Abortions" [May 6] was pure ditto-head propaganda. He writes, for example: "[E]arlier in the twentieth century there were one or two parties that exhibited the following characteristics: they were totally devoid of intellectual integrity; they were masters of propaganda; they had a great talent for switching principles at a moment's notice; and they practiced the fine art of mass homicide."

(Continued on page 27)

Pedophilia's victims: The discussion continues

Further commentary occasioned by Father John J. Dreese's "The Other Victims of Priest Pedophilia" [April 22] will be found on page 28.

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COMMONWEAL

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Don't even think of it

Ordinatio sacerdotalis, Pope John Paul II's apostolic letter (pp. 4-5) reaffirming in no uncertain terms the exclusion of women from the priesthood, poses two principal dangers. For those who long for a pope on a white horse to knock the church into shape by routing those ever mischievous "progressives" and "feminists," the blunt language of the letter may appear to be the answer to their prayers. Indeed, for them it is bracing—although for many others chilling—to learn that the tradition of ordaining men "alone" "is to be definitively held by all the church's faithful," and that, according to *L'Osservatore Romano*, "it does not belong to matters freely open to dispute...and to teach the contrary is equivalent to leading consciences into error."

But you know what they say about answered prayers.

John Paul is quite certain, although not infallibly certain, of the inherently masculine nature of the Catholic priesthood. However, it is equally certain that whatever the virtue of the pope's clarity on this divisive issue, the larger question of gender equality within the church will not be resolved by such adamantine declarations. Catholicism may not be of this world, but it remains in this world, and just as the church acceded to democracy and religious liberty, it will have to come to terms with the full social and legal enfranchisement of women. The Vatican can offer no refuge from this brave new world—nor should it. Women, after all, are "absolutely necessary and irreplaceable" to the church, writes the pope. But need women be necessary and irreplaceable in exactly the same way forever and ever? Do virgin, martyr, and mother exhaust the Catholic vocabulary describing a woman's spiritual calling?

An equal danger is posed, however, by those who practice an infallibilism of their own in proclaiming that notions of equality and inclusiveness must trump tradition and the teaching of the magisterium. The pope's decision "will not stand," they announce; it is "just a matter of time" before reason prevails over superstition. Yet, in all honesty, the pope's letter makes this a great deal less certain. Moreover, fair-minded people recognize that the ordination of women presents theological as well as anthropological and psychological hurdles to the church. In cleaving closely to the binding authority of tradition on the question of ordination, the pope is obviously hoping to resist what he sees as the desacralizing tendencies that pervade much of modern society. *Ordinatio sacerdotalis* asserts nothing less than that the nature of the priesthood in its historically masculine identity "pertains to the church's divine constitution itself...[and] is to be seen as the faithful observance of a plan to be ascribed to the wisdom of the Lord of the universe." In other words, the symbolic role of the male priest is considered a revealed truth, one constitutive of the mystery of Christ made manifest in the church.

That is a bold claim, and one that many faithful Catholics find theologically suspect. But it is not an implausible stance for an institution whose leaders are duty-bound to

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preserve and pass on as well as interpret a historical revelation.

What unnecessarily adds to the difficulty of this teaching is the tone of the pope's letter. As Archbishop Rembert Weakland, O.S.B., forthrightly states in a response written to the people of his archdiocese (pp. 5-6), Catholics are not helped toward acceptance of the pope's teaching by the letter's seeming indifference to their concerns about equality and justice. Nor is the pope's authority enhanced when he teaches without seeking the views and support of his fellow bishops. Whatever is meant by the relatively novel term "definitively held," the authority the pope is rightly concerned to protect and preserve is best exercised in union with the bishops, not without them or above them. Just as troubling is the pope's apparent desire to end all debate on the question. That seems an impetuous and Draconian response to a complex and still relatively unexplored development. How can the Vatican be so absolutely sure that the Holy Spirit cannot call women to the priesthood? Has an honest and faithful theological discussion of the ordination of women even begun? Is it really to be censored and even punished so preemptively? What are the likely ecumenical implications?

It is impossible not to lean on Cardinal John Henry Newman at times such as these. Newman testified eloquently in his life and his writings both to the necessity of episcopal authority and to the dangers of an injudicious application of that authority. Newman was cautious about ecclesiastical and theological change, but he was equally committed to full theological discussion. He wrote: "So difficult is it to assent inwardly to propositions, verified to us neither by reason nor experience, but depending for their reception on the word of the church as God's oracle, that she has ever shown the utmost care to contract, as far as possible, the range of truths and the sense of propositions, of which she demands this absolute reception."

We pray the church will remain definitively faithful to this tradition.

APOSTOLIC LETTER

ON WOMEN'S ORDINATION

A 'DEFINITIVE' NO

Apostolic Letter of His Holiness Pope John Paul II on Reserving Priestly Ordination to Men Alone.

Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate,

1. Priestly ordination, which hands on the office entrusted by Christ to his Apostles of teaching, sanctifying, and governing the faithful, has in the Catholic church from the beginning always been reserved to men alone. This tradition has also been faithfully maintained by the Oriental churches.

When the question of the ordination of women arose in the Anglican Communion, Pope Paul VI, out of fidelity to his office of safeguarding the apostolic tradition, and also with a view to removing a new obstacle placed in the way of Christian unity, reminded Anglicans of the position of the Catholic church: "She holds that it is not admissible to ordain women to the priesthood, for very fundamental reasons. These reasons include: the example recorded in the Sacred Scriptures of Christ choosing his Apostles only from among men; the constant practice of the church, which has imitated Christ in choosing only men; and her living teaching authority which has consistently held that the exclusion of women from the priesthood is in accordance with God's plan for his church."

But since the question had also become the subject of debate among theologians and in certain Catholic circles, Paul VI directed the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to set forth and expound the teaching of the church on this matter. This was done through the declaration *Inter insigniores*, which the supreme pontiff approved and ordered to be published.

2. The declaration recalls and explains the fundamental reasons for this teaching, reasons expounded by Paul VI, and concludes that the church "does not consider herself authorized to admit women to priestly ordination." To these fundamental reasons the document adds other theological reasons which illustrate the appropriateness of the divine provision, and it also shows clearly that Christ's way of acting did not proceed from sociological or cultural motives peculiar to his time. As Paul VI later explained: "The real reason is that, in giving the church her fundamental constitution, her theological anthropology—thereafter always followed by the church's tradition—Christ established things in this way."

In the Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, I myself wrote in this regard: "In calling only men as his Apostles, Christ acted in a completely free and sovereign manner. In doing so, he exercised the same freedom with which, in all his behavior, he emphasized the dignity and the vocation of women, without conforming to the prevailing customs and to the traditions sanctioned by the legislation of the time."

In fact, the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles attest that this call was made in accordance with God's eternal plan: Christ chose those whom he willed (cf. Mark 3:13-14; John 6:70), and he did so in union with the Father, "through the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:2), after having spent the night in prayer (cf. Luke 6:12). Therefore, in granting admission to the ministerial priesthood, the church has always acknowledged as a perennial norm her Lord's way of acting in choosing the twelve men whom he made the foundation of his church (cf. Rev. 21:14). These men did not in fact receive only a function which could thereafter be exercised by any member of the church; rather they were specifically and intimately associated in the mission of the Incarnate Word himself (cf. Matt. 10:1, 7-8; 28:16-20; Mark 3:13-16; 16:14-15). The Apostles did the same when they chose fellow workers who would succeed them in their min-

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istry. Also included in this choice were those who, throughout the time of the church, would carry on the Apostles' mission of representing Christ the Lord and Redeemer.

3. Furthermore, the fact that the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God and Mother of the church, received neither the mission proper to the Apostles nor the ministerial priesthood clearly shows that the nonadmission of women to priestly ordination cannot mean that women are of lesser dignity, nor can it be construed as discrimination against them. Rather, it is to be seen as the faithful observance of a plan to be ascribed to the wisdom of the Lord of the universe.

The presence and the role of women in the life and mission of the church, although not linked to the ministerial priesthood, remain absolutely necessary and irreplaceable. As the declaration *Inter insigniores* points out, "the church desires that Christian women should become fully aware of the greatness of their mission: today their role is of capital importance both for the renewal and humanization of society and for the rediscovery by believers of the true face of the church." The New Testament and the whole history of the church give ample evidence of the presence in the church of women, true disciples, witnesses to Christ in the family and in society, as well as in total consecration to the service of God and of the gospel. "By defending the dignity of women and their vocation, the church has shown honor and gratitude for those women who—faithful to the gospel—have shared in every age in the apostolic mission of the whole people of God. They are the holy martyrs, virgins, and the mothers of families, who bravely bore witness to their faith and passed on the church's faith and tradition by bringing up their children in the spirit of the gospel."

Moreover, it is to the holiness of the faithful that the hierarchical structure of the church is totally ordered. For this reason, the declaration *Inter insigniores* recalls: "the only better gift, which can and must be desired, is love (cf. 1 Cor. 12 and 13). The greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven are not the ministers but the saints."

4. Although the teaching that priestly ordination is to be reserved to men alone has been preserved by the constant and universal tradition of the church and firmly taught by the magisterium in its more recent documents, at the present time in some places it is nonetheless considered still open to debate, or the church's judgment that women are not to be admitted to ordination is considered to have a merely disciplinary force.

Wherefore, in order that all doubt may be removed regarding a matter of great importance, a matter which pertains to the church's divine constitution itself, in virtue of my ministry of confirming the brethren (cf. Luke 22:32), I declare that the church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women and that this judgment is to be definitively held by all the church's faithful.

Invoking an abundance of divine assistance upon you, venerable brothers, and upon the faithful, I impart my Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, on 22 May, the Solemnity of Pentecost, in the year 1994, the sixteenth of my pontificate.

JOHN PAUL II

LETTER FROM MILWAUKEE

A BISHOP RESPONDS

WHAT OF THE CONSEQUENCES?

In his Apostolic Letter to the bishops of the world dated May 22, 1994, the Holy Father has declared that the question of the ordination of women is no longer open to debate. In this he has certainly disagreed with my position that the issue should be left open because of the unresolved theological questions involved, and because of the pastoral problems which would result from an untimely closing of the doors on the issue. I certainly will be obedient to this command.

Yet in a spirit of filial loyalty, I must also express my own inner turmoil at this decision. I know that in the long run my obedience will result in a deepening of my faith, but I state sincerely that it will not be done without much sacrifice and inner searching.

As a bishop I will have to ponder what the phrase, "this judgment is to be held definitively," means in terms of its demands on the faithful. This terminology is not traditional in the Catholic church. I note that the Holy Father has avoided the word "infallible." Moreover, it would seem that, in saying that this teaching must be held "definitively," he is declaring that his judgment in this regard must be adhered to with some degree of assent of faith. His intentions, however, are clear: on this issue the debate is closed.

Yet, as a bishop I would not be loyal to the Holy Father if I did not again point out the pastoral problems I now will face in my archdiocese. These have to be the object of my concern because many will be confused and troubled, discouraged and disillusioned.

For example, what effect will this declaration have on so many women and men, especially younger women and vowed religious, who still see this question as one of justice and equality, all protestation to the contrary notwithstanding? How, as a bishop, am I to deal with the anger and disillusionment which will inevitably result? What can I do to instill hope in so many women who are now living on the margins of the church?

What effects will this declaration have on theologians who are still concerned about the theological underpinnings of the pope's teaching? Will they be able to express honestly their concerns? Will adherence to this judgment of the Holy Father be a requisite for teaching as a Catholic theologian?

What effects will this declaration have on those men and women for whom the issue of the way in which the church exercises its authority is already a problem? Many are still wrestling with *Humanae vitae*, and thus have difficulty accepting that a single person alone can decide what they must in faith accept. Are they now to be put against the wall, as it were, over this issue?

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Lastly, what effects will this declaration have on ecumenical dialogue? Since full communion among the churches ultimately must include the mutual recognition of ministries, will this declaration mean that full communion is ruled out with all except the Orthodox churches? The Orthodox churches may agree with the pope on the question at hand, but are usually shocked when the pope teaches the bishops and does not speak in union with them.

The Holy Father has certainly thought of these consequences. Since this document is more dogmatic in tone, his pastoral concern may not be immediately obvious. We must trust that the Holy Father is sensitive to the reactions this declaration will cause. We must also trust that, in his pastoral concern, he will help us face the difficulties which this declaration will pose for the faith of many.

His remarks that the presence and role of women in the life and mission of the church are absolutely necessary and irreplaceable could lead to a fresh and new look at the question of jurisdiction and ministry.

As we all move ahead to ponder and understand this teaching, I realize that it will be a difficult moment for many here in the archdiocese. I hope that those who find it so will let me accompany them on that journey, as painful as it might be.

REMBERT G. WEAKLAND, O.S.B.

Rembert G. Weakland is the Archbishop of Milwaukee.

REPORT FROM ITALY

THE SECOND REPUBLIC

'CONTESTAZIONE' TO COMPROMISE

The week before Pentecost saw Italians riveted to their TV screens. Not for the excitement of the European soccer championship (won handily by the Milan club, owned by the Prime Minister designate, Silvio Berlusconi) as for the much closer confirmation vote in the Italian Senate of the Berlusconi government itself. As things turned out Berlusconi and his allies triumphed in the Senate by the narrowest possible margin: a single vote. His victory was made possible by the defection of a number of the senators of the *Partito Popolare Italiano* (successor to the discredited Christian Democrats) who defied party discipline by either voting outright for Berlusconi or abstaining, thus permitting the slim margin of victory.

A few days later the Berlusconi government was confirmed, as expected, by the Italian Assembly (the lower house of Parliament) in which his right-of-center coalition enjoys a comfortable majority. And thus the Italian Second Republic was officially launched.

Obviously the Senate debate and vote were crucial; and it was poignant to listen to the senators of the *Partito Popolare* anguish over their decision to break ranks with their party. Basically their reasoning was twofold. Negatively, they feared that a vote of no-confidence could lead to new elections and the real possibility of an even greater electoral victory for the Berlusconi forces. But positively, there was a strong sense that, after years of turmoil and scandal, the voters had opted for a new beginning and that Berlusconi and his partners deserved a chance to show what they could do to revitalize both a slack economy and an effete political system.

That the Berlusconi coalition is itself a volatile one, cobbled together by joining his own *Forza Italia* party with Umberto Bossi's Northern League and Gianfranco Fini's National Alliance (successor to the postwar neo-Fascist party), is clear. Moreover, the inclusion of the former neo-Fascists has elicited concern, both in Italy and among her European partners, over the genuineness of their commitment to democratic values and procedures. A good deal of time was spent in the Italian Senate debate, seeking reassurance on this score. Nonetheless, risks and challenges abound and were perceptively detailed in Leo Wollemborg's recent "Report from Italy" ["A Shaky Coalition: How Far to the Right?," *Commonweal*, June 3].

Equally significant, however, are the new possibilities that may also emerge. Whatever their demerits, the Christian Democrats led Italy out of the abyss of World War II and presided over almost fifty years of peace and prosperity and, no less importantly, of real practice in the ways of democracy. They initiated the historic "opening to the Left," entering into a long-enduring coalition with the Socialists: a move that might be considered the political precursor (though, of course, in the opposite direction) of the current "opening to the Right" by Berlusconi.

Having observed the Italian political and social scene over a period of thirty years, I have often been struck by the frequency with which one word appears both in political debate and editorial pronouncement: the word *contestazione*. Its use in Italian eclipses by far any American employment of the cognate "contestation." Moreover, its rhetorical energy crackles with intimations of contest, objection, dispute, even struggle. It seems both to reflect and to promote an adversarial atmosphere in which "compromise" can only be parsed as ideological impurity and infidelity: far more grievous, in certain quarters, than any minor lapses from the Sixth or Ninth Commandments.

By contrast, what I sensed during a recent stay in Italy is the very beginnings of a desire to move beyond the ideological a prioris and fixations of the past toward a more pragmatic vision and style. Berlusconi seems to many to embody this approach; hence his popularity and the willingness to give him a chance.

Indeed, several experienced commentators with whom I spoke even envisage the eventual emergence of two political alignments, somewhat akin to our own Republican and Democratic parties (with their own left and right wings), out of the decades-long, often confused farrago of Italian politics. If the Berlusconi coalition promotes such an outcome, then the Second Italian Republic might indeed have a promising future.

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On the vigil of Pentecost, having been confirmed as his country's prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi paid a courtesy call on Pope John Paul II, still recuperating in a Rome hospital from his fall and surgery. Responding to reporters' queries regarding the purpose of his meeting with the pope, Signor Berlusconi quipped: "I need prayers." He was only partly joking.

ROBERT P. IMBELLI

Robert P. Imbelli is a priest of the Archdiocese of New York.

REPORT FROM EL SALVADOR

THE RIGHT WINS BIG

ARENA AT THE CONTROLS, FOR NOW

In contrast to the euphoria of the South African Left, occasioned by the election of Nelson Mandela, El Salvador's national runoff election in April, following twelve years of civil war, resulted in little jubilation for the opposition Left. For them, the March election and the runoff were a great disappointment.

In both rounds their candidate for president, Ruben Zamora, was outpolled two-to-one by the governing right-wing ARENA party's Armando Calderon Sol. At the local level as well, the Left's candidates fared poorly, winning only 15 mayoralties to ARENA's 207. Even in areas known as "control zones" during the civil war—regions where the guerrillas claimed widespread popular support—the rebels-turned-politicians found that in most towns their supposed supporters voted for someone else, usually the ARENA candidate.

Initially, the national assembly looked like one bright spot for the FMLN, the party of the former guerrillas, and for the Democratic Convergence (DC), Zamora's party. The two parties had formed a coalition to support Zamora's presidential bid, and won twenty-two seats in the assembly (twenty-one for the FMLN, one for the DC). This put them in second place behind ARENA (thirty-nine seats), and ahead of the Christian Democrats' eighteen seats. But the achievement and its promise were short-lived, making President Alfredo Cristiani look prophetic. On the night of the runoff, he had predicted that as soon as the FMLN actually got into the assembly, its unity would crumble. On May 1, at the first session of the new assembly, FMLN deputies split over how to respond to a parliamentary maneuver approved in the closing days of the previous assembly. That maneuver gave ARENA an absolute majority in the assembly's directorate, even though it had not won an absolute majority of seats in the assembly.

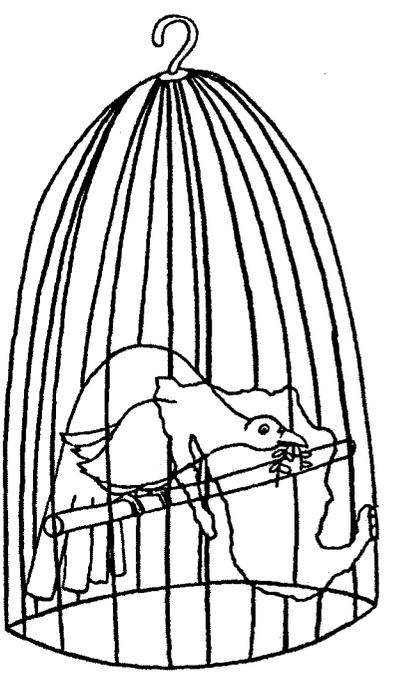
The FMLN called the maneuver a violation of the assembly's principle of proportional representation. Three of the FMLN's five member-groups said that the FMLN should boycott participating in the directorate, even though it was entitled to at least two positions. The two other FMLN groups disagreed with the boycott, and when the assembly opened, they voted for the ARENA candidate for assembly president. In return, ARENA supported their two candidates for the directorate. After a week of ugly internal charges and countercharges of "traitor" and "radical," a specially convened FMLN assembly declared that the two deputies elected to the directorate were not to be considered representatives of the FMLN. Left open for the time being was whether the two groups would withdraw from or be expelled by the party.

During the campaign, questions were raised about the remaining parts of the United Nations-brokered peace accords: Would they be carried out after the election? Concern was so high that late in the campaign Calderon Sol stated explicitly that he was pledged to implementing the accords.

Those monitoring the accords have been worried in particular about the shortcomings in the overhaul of El Salvador's police system mandated by the peace settlement. The process for creating a new National Civilian Police (PNC) is behind schedule, and according to some opposition leaders, the new PNC's structure and personnel are dominated by holdovers from the old and feared national security apparatus of the civil-war days. That apparatus, which human rights groups regularly linked to El Salvador's right-wing death squads, was supposed to be abolished under the accords.

The critics' charges found support in a recent report to the Security Council by UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. The report said that ONUSAL, the UN observer mission in El Salvador, has "observed a considerable imbalance" in the PNC in favor of members of the old security forces. "All these imbalances," said the report, "run counter to the letter and the spirit of the peace accords and need to be urgently redressed in order to avoid further militarization of the new civil police."

In an angry denial, Salvadoran Army General Mauricio Vargas said Boutros-Ghali's report had "a high content of im-



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perial arrogance" and that "the militarization of the PNC...doesn't exist." But others insist it has long existed. Late last year, at a critical point in the implementation of the accords, a key diplomatic source declared that the "civilianization" of the police was not happening. Recently, ONUSAL director Enrique ter Horst acknowledged that the PNC had "drifted away significantly from its original philosophy" that it be "friendly to the citizens and not have the repressive character" of the former security forces. "This is one issue," said ter Horst, "on which we can very well understand the position of the FMLN. It's a position based on the peace accords themselves." Ter Horst expressed hope that "things will be improving" after the recent resignation, reportedly under pressure, of PNC Deputy Director Oscar Peña Duran. Critics said Peña Duran had stuffed the PNC's command level with cronies from the much-feared army unit he headed before moving to the PNC.

On the question of land reform, a key issue in the long civil war, so far only 25 percent of those slated to be beneficiaries of a new transfer program have received land. The remaining transfers are freighted with serious legal problems. In many cases, the original owners do not possess legal titles to their land. To solve this problem, the government has approved special legislation. But if the transfer program fails to move forward, says an FMLN representative, land seizures and evictions may follow and the situation could become explosive.

What is to be expected from Calderon Sol's new ARENA administration? Rightists and leftists—who agree on little else in El Salvador—concur that it is too early to tell. David Escobar Galindo, a confidant of outgoing President Cristiani, feels ARENA is moving away from what he calls its "belligerent conservatism." The party has often been accused of having ties with the death squads, and the UN Truth Commission on El Salvador concluded, after an eight-month investigation, that the party's founder, Roberto D'Aubuisson, was a key death squad figure and had ordered the 1980 murder of San Salvador Archbishop Oscar Romero.

Escobar Galindo believes that Calderon Sol will have problems that Cristiani did not. When Cristiani joined ARENA in 1984, says Escobar Galindo, the more traditional sectors of the party thought that he would be a mere ornament. "But now they know that someone can come in and do very advanced things. For this reason, they are going to be more vigilant with Calderon Sol." If the more conservative line in ARENA prevails, Escobar Galindo believes, there is a risk that the new government will fail. Conditions in the country today, he believes, call for "a government which provides openings, reaches agreements, and establishes links with other forces."

Political analyst Hector Dada expects that Calderon Sol's government is going to have to provide certain kinds of social programs not generally associated with the Right. He gives two reasons: (1) stability needs to be preserved; and (2) international organizations will be watching. Many of the latter, he says, "are now discussing openly whether the continuation of very 'orthodox' adjustment programs may not be producing the next generation of Latin American revolutions."

A wide range of Salvadoran opposition leaders agree that their efforts must now focus on economic and social issues, and that they must pay particular attention to politics on the local level. "I honestly think the election showed us that the popular movement is quite small," says Zamora. "The challenge now is to rebuild it.... Its leaders have to be generated from the grass roots." Zamora says the future of the Left in Salvadoran politics is uncertain: "I think we have to call into question whether the FMLN and the Democratic Convergence should continue to exist. If we decide they shouldn't, then we would have to propose the creation of new, different [political] instruments."

What is likely to happen next in El Salvador? Following its commanding electoral victory, some members of ARENA were talking dynasty: "We want to be like the PRI [in Mexico] and rule for many years." And lots of things are in their favor: ARENA controls both the legislative and the executive branches, and will have decisive influence in naming the new Supreme Court. It won almost 80 percent of the mayoralties, and thus will have an even greater day-to-day chance of winning favor with voters. Instead of the "dual hegemony" that existed in El Salvador during the civil war—when each side had enough power to keep the other from imposing its will—ARENA is now firmly in the driver's seat. Nonetheless, David Rodriguez, an FMLN leader who has been working with *campesinos* since the 1960s, believes that ARENA is not invincible. "As privatization and ARENA's neoliberal projects deepen," he says, "so will repercussions for the poorest people in the country....They'll begin to get frustrated, and if the Left gets better organized politically and electorally, it will be able to make Calderon Sol pay." The question now is how well, and how quickly, the Left can organize.

GENE PALUMBO

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REPORT FROM A MOTHERHOUSE

THE SISTERS STILL TEACH

HOW TO AGE, HOW TO DIE

The Angelus sounds rarely at the motherhouse in Adrian, Michigan, these days. With increasing frequency, however, the bell tolls the death of yet another sister.

Apart from that somber note, the motherhouse remains the center of a rich tradition of church liturgy, intellectual ferment, and artistic life.

The aging of the sisters, in place of diminishing activities, has actually stimulated them. Older women religious who have served many years in far-off ministries now feel a need to return to their roots, to be reconnected with the congregation. Sick and aging sisters return to the motherhouse health-care

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center to be nursed and cared for until they join the ever-widening circle of their friends buried in the cemetery on the campus outskirts.

To care for the membership and to steward resources, new buildings have been built, old ones refurbished. The former novitiate now serves as Weber Conference Center. The rectory and the academy dorms have been redesigned as sisters' residences. The laundry now houses INAI—an artists' gallery—and a maintenance shop.

The changes have brought an increasing number of employees to the campus and stimulated the local economy. If the motherhouse complex, which includes Saint Joseph Academy and Siena Heights College, were computed as one, the sisters would be among the largest employers in the county.

Campus activities blend in with the liturgical cycle. Sunday liturgies in Holy Rosary Chapel attract people from the college and community. The chapel has a reputation for good music, stimulating homilies, and a special, welcoming presence.

Intellectual life flourishes also. The conference center offers lectures, workshops, and retreats. A concern for social issues has generated local chapters of Bread for the World, Crop Walk, and Oxfam. Of special concern is Saint Mary's food pantry in downtown Adrian. Each month a different sisters' community collects and delivers food to the pantry.

Artists work in clay, paints, and tapestry. More often than not, however, as the sisters age they turn to handicrafts: knitting, crocheting, and fancywork.

Life at a motherhouse isn't always idyllic. Every community has its eccentrics. Sister A, in full habit and carrying several brief cases making her look like a bag lady, wanders the grounds entrapping in conversation anyone who crosses her path. Sister B refuses the kiss of peace at Mass. "It's unsanitary," she says, hiding her hands behind her scapular. Sister C eats by herself in a quiet alcove off the dining room. She's never adjusted to conversation at meals; she longs for the old days of spiritual reading in the refectory.

Yet with all its quirks, the motherhouse of the late twentieth century is a community that the nineteenth-century utopians would have envied. It has survived where phalansteries, Icarians, and Saint-Simonians have failed.

The secret of its success: a community of believers, its members united in mind, heart, and prayer.

The aging of the membership threatens this way of life. It comes at a time when our society desperately needs the witness of communities committed to nonviolence and respect for the dignity of others, no matter how eccentric they may be.

Church response to this impending disaster has been erratic. In many cases where action has been taken, it smacks of a blame-the-victim mentality. The vocations office of a Wisconsin diocese, for example, decided to produce a video on vocations. A poll of seminarians and novices in religious communities found that the majority had been inspired by a loved religious or priest.

Voila! The way to attract more vocations is to encourage women religious to invite more candidates into the community. The vocations office gathered sisters in major locations in

the diocese to view a newly completed video and then discuss how they could encourage vocations. It was painful to watch retired women in their seventies and eighties rise and admit their failure to find new recruits. As if their years of dedicated service to the church weren't enough, now they were being asked to accept the blame for not having found their own replacements!

Where is faith in all this?

It seems to me that we've fallen into the cultural trap of valuing people only for the physical resources they can give the church. Contemporary literature with its stress on reweaving, rebuilding, reinvigorating, or reforming religious life appears to fall into that category. That kind of thinking, it seems to me, buys into the consumerist ethic.

Religious congregations would welcome new membership, of course, to add life and enthusiasm to their ministries. And if, by changing their lives one whit they could further assist the church's mission, they'd be glad to do it. Religious communities, after all, have proved their adaptability in countless ways, not the least being their response to the great social issues of poverty and injustice.

Timothy Radcliffe, O.P., the master of the Dominican Order, visited Adrian in 1992. In an address in the chapel of Maria Health Care Center, Radcliffe challenged sisters of all ages to preach by their lives a counterculture to the consumerism that threatens to destroy third-world countries and our own country as well.

In a society that worships youth and possessions, sees diminishment and death as failure, what greater witness can women religious offer than the example of dying well? Could this be our greatest gift to the church—not the busy years of our active ministry—but the tranquil, peaceful years when we observe nature's changing seasons and the closing cycle of our lives? A sister friend of mine in her forties is dying of cancer. She has told her students about her sickness and her desire to continue teaching as long as she is able. Far from denying death,

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this woman is welcoming it lovingly, making it the high point of her life. She witnesses to the words of Saint Paul: "Death, where is your victory? Death, where is your sting?" (1 Cor. 15:55).

Who knows what God has in store for religious congregations? If it be life and growth, we welcome it as gift. If it be death, we accept it as women of faith. We remember the words of our sister Dominican, Saint Catherine of Siena: "All the way to heaven is heaven, for Jesus said, 'I am the way.'"

LOIS SPEAR

Lois Spear, O.P., teaches journalism at Siena Heights College.

WORLD WATCH

J. Bryan Hehir

TRADE & HUMAN RIGHTS

CLINTON, CHINA & INTERDEPENDENCE

This column is written in the wake of President Bill Clinton's decision to continue Most Favored Nation (MFN) status for China. Much of the commentary responding to Clinton's decision focuses on the fact that it reverses one of his most visible campaign promises. Since political figures change direction with some regularity, the fixation of the press and policy analysts on the reversal theme, almost to the exclusion of the merits of the case, points to a broader concern. It arises from a review of the China policy along with those toward Bosnia, Somalia, and Haiti. The fear is that there is no central guiding theme in the Clinton policy, no framework within which specific policies are elaborated with attention to diverse cases but with a broader purpose directing specific choices. The Clinton administration's response to this critique is that the state of the world does not allow for a grand design; there is no single unifying threat, so there can be no one integrating principle to guide policy. Fundamentally, the administration's response is sound, but it fails to convince most observers because it seeks to explain too much. Even in the face of a world of multiple, disconnected problems, there is a standard of coherence and consistency demanded of the policy of a major power, a standard which the first eighteen months of the Clinton policy has not yet met.

The best defense of the policy which can be mounted is to stress the administration's argument about complexity and diversity in the world and then to turn to specific issues to show why previous policy perspectives are not adequate for the 1990s. The human rights policy toward China provides the opportunity for such specific analysis. My own reaction to the Clinton decision on MFN is to judge it at two levels. First, the merits of the specific decision. Given the multiple objectives of U.S. policy toward China, I find the continuation of MFN status defensible, but I would have imposed more stringent

costs, through multilateral and bilateral policies, for the lack of any Chinese progress on central human rights issues like freedom of religion. Moreover, while it is wise to move away from the rigid review formula which produced the 1993-94 policy quandary, Clinton did not provide an alternative framework for review of Chinese policy on human rights. Briefly, the basic decision can be defended, but the policy framework lacks specific constraints and criteria for future judgments.

Second, the China case can be looked at as an example of the changing context in which a human rights policy must be elaborated. This argument requires a broader review, essentially distinguishing three stages of human rights policy that have now produced the issues of the 1990s.

The first stage runs from the late 1940s through the 1960s. This is the "UN stage" of human rights policy. At the heart of this period is the promulgation of what Professor Louis Henkin called the "UN Bill of Human Rights," consisting of the UN Declaration of Human Rights and the subsequent covenants and conventions which specify the Declaration's meaning. The essential contribution of these texts is that they cracked the shell of state sovereignty, transforming human rights violations from the realm of "domestic jurisdiction" to a concern and responsibility of the international community of states. This move established a fault line in world politics, although the implications of the move were not visible for the next twenty-five years; indeed, the full meaning of this international responsibility for human rights will only become visible in this decade. The reason for the delayed reaction is that the onset of the cold war in the late 1940s smothered the UN role on human rights. The ideological struggle of the superpowers pervaded every dimension of world politics. The UN documents themselves became a point of contention

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as the West defended "political-civil rights" and the East argued that real rights were "socioeconomic."

With the UN agencies paralyzed on human rights, possibilities for implementing a human rights policy moved to individual states. The second stage of the human rights story runs from the 1970s through the end of the cold war. The U.S. debate about human rights, catalyzed by the Congress with its human rights legislation of 1973-74, and then pressed with new authority by the Carter presidency, established the basis for the U.S. policy debate. If anything, the human rights policy of the 1970s showed the complexity of trying to move beyond the fault line of stressing international responsibility for human rights to shaping specific choices of a state. It was, however, cold-war complexity, something quite different from the issues confronting the Clinton policy of the 1990s. During the Carter-Reagan-Bush years, the framework for the human rights debate was the relationship between human rights and security issues. The structure of the argument was set by the legislation of the 1970s, requiring a review of human rights for all countries receiving U.S. military or economic assistance. The debate was about U.S. bilateral relations with "allies," all of whom were somehow regarded as important in the struggle against communism. The trade-offs in the policy debate (about Korea, Iran, Brazil, Chile, El Salvador) were how far one could press human rights claims without eroding U.S. "security interests." The Carter policy was both new and controversial because it pressed human rights issues; the first-term Reagan policy gave clear primacy to security claims; the later Reagan policy, under pressure, found human rights more useful in the Philippines and Korea. But this whole structure of argument collapsed with the end of the cold war.

The third stage of the human rights debate, the world of the 1990s, has neither the passion nor the relative simplicity of the "rights-security" debates of the previous twenty years. Neither Jimmy Carter's policy nor Ronald Reagan's view of the world provides much guidance on the new terrain.

The decision which Bill Clinton faced on China exemplifies the problems of the third stage of human rights policy. The predominant tension of the policy was not about security issues, but the logic of economic interdependence. The United States does not (at the moment) face a security threat from China, but a negative MFN decision would "cost" U.S. jobs and export opportunities. The Chinese "threat" is embodied in the mutual gains the two economies seek from each other. Security issues are debated in terms of polarities (us vs. them); interdependence issues are debated in terms of linkage (us and them). Linkage issues do not dissolve matters of principle; central to the China debate is precisely how human rights are to be weighed in relationship to economic issues. But the dynamic of the debate is less that of standing against a threat than relating to multiple objectives which do not fit nicely together.

The multiple objectives, moreover, fit into a multilateral framework. The rights-security debate was overwhelmingly bilateral. Today, the U.S.-China policy agenda mixes human rights and trade policy with nuclear proliferation issues and the role China plays at the United Nations. Security issues are on the table but in a framework of multilateral collaboration. The logic of interdependence pervades both economic *and* security issues.

In many ways the new context for human rights policy is less conflicted and less dangerous than the pattern of cold-war politics. But the clarity which danger and threat bring to thinking about security policy is replaced today by the interlocking possibilities and needs that interdependence creates. The MFN decision of the Clinton administration is open to the charge that rights claims did not receive enough weight; but the president and his advisers are correct when they point out that it is the whole framework and fabric of rights policy which must be rethought in order to preserve both moral principle and multiple interests in the conditions of interdependence. □

OF SEVERAL MINDS Liz Leibold McCloskey

BOYS & GIRLS TOGETHER

BUT NOT EVERYWHERE & ALL THE TIME

A few years ago, the Detroit school system tried something new to combat unemployment, dropout, and homicide rates among urban males. It developed a plan to open three all-male academies. A legal challenge by the American Civil Liberties Union and the NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund prevented the schools from opening. Two all-male classes in a Dade County, Florida, school were discontinued in 1989 when the regional branch of the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights prohibited them. The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., African-American Immersion Elementary School in Milwaukee was intended as a school for African-American boys, but, as the result of a legal challenge, now accepts African-American girls as well. Both proponents and opponents of single-sex schooling in the public schools appeal to equal opportunity to justify their positions, but the courts and federal regulators have found the arguments of the opposition compelling.

As a result, Senator John C. Danforth (R-Mo.) is preparing an amendment that he hopes to include in the "Improving America's Schools Act of 1993." The amendment would provide grant money to four selected Chapter 1 schools to gather data and evaluate the concept of single-sex classrooms in poor urban neighborhoods. It would allow those schools to exercise hiring preferences that would allow men to teach boys and women to teach girls. Pending the outcome of discussions with groups such as the Women's

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Legal Defense Fund, the NAACP, the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights, and the U.S. Department of Education, the amendment will either explicitly or implicitly waive civil rights laws (Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, section 204 of the Education Amendments of 1974, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964) to allow these schools to experiment with this model without the threat of antidiscrimination suits.

Critics of single-sex education programs have two basic worries. Michael Meyers, the executive director of the New York Civil Rights Coalition, argues that schools designed for black males lead to a balkanization that diminishes multiculturalism. He argues that it is "shocking" that blacks, "who once stood in solid support of ensuring equal and integrated public education," would support same-sex education for black adolescents. Ellen Vargus, of the Women's Legal Defense Fund, says that separate education for girls has historically meant inferior education. This year marks the fortieth anniversary of *Brown* v. *Board of Education*, in which "separate but equal" education was declared unconstitutional. The groups that fought hard and long to ensure equal opportunity in education, as well as in other realms, are understandably hesitant about allowing antidiscrimination laws to be waived. In Vargus's view, "we ignore history at our risk" when we begin carving out exceptions to such important legal doctrines. And when the law put aside is based on the "feel-good justification" that single-sex classes might benefit disadvantaged boys and girls, without, she claims, "a shred of evidence" to support that assumption, a perilous precedent is set.

Discriminating on the basis of sex, these groups argue, should only be done in the most narrowly tailored circumstances to remedy past discrimination. A 1992 study by the American Association of University Women concluded that girls are disadvantaged in coeducational schooling because teachers give less attention and encouragement to girls, girls are sexually harassed in school, and some tests are sexually biased. Numerous studies have shown the benefits of single-sex education for girls. Thus a credible case can be made that single-sex education for girls could be justified on legal and policy grounds, and that groups such as the NOW Legal Defense Fund and the Women's Legal Defense Fund might not challenge a public school program that provides all-girl science or math classes, given that those subjects have been dominated by boys in the past. But they do not want to see corresponding all-boys classes. Since boys have been advantaged from the start, the reasoning goes that boys do not need special treatment to remedy past wrongs. Future separation of boys and girls may lead again to unequal educational opportunities.

But the logic and worries of civil rights groups may not hold in the inner city. It is generally acknowledged that African-American male students in schools in poor neighborhoods do not receive the same academic advantages as the male students (usually white and middle class) who have been the subjects of the studies. African-American males have too few male role models who exemplify the fruits of academic achievement. A widely cited statistic shows that young African-American males have a greater chance of going to prison than to college; the murder rate among young African-American males reveals the fatalistic approach they take to their own lives. Although there have been no conclusive studies on the subject, advocates of single-sex classrooms for disadvantaged boys and girls argue that it is actually the boys who are ignored in classroom settings and the girls who dominate the academic scene. Girls are called upon more often, while the boys are treated as annoyances or distractions rather than as serious students. Instead of worrying that these young men will get undue advantage in single-sex classes, we ought to be asking whether they aren't being programmed to fail in their current classrooms. For a certain segment of the male student population, then, single-sex classes may have a salutary effect.

I share one worry of the critics and it is that boys have been the primary focus of inner-city, single-sex education. Parallel girls' programs have often been an afterthought or a preemptive strike against lawsuits. The Danforth proposal needs to be carefully crafted to ensure that the girls' programs receive the same attention and resources as the boys' programs. Initial drafts of the proposal reveal a bias toward inner-city males, even though girls in the inner city engage in their own version of self-destructive behavior. Criticism from women's groups is having the positive effect of moving the Danforth proposal toward a more balanced approach. It would be a shame, though, if civil rights opposition squelches these efforts before they have had the opportunity to be tested and before they have had the opportunity to touch children's lives in ways that may never be quantifiable.

The pursuit of data and their credibility, or lack thereof, seems to be one of the driving forces behind justifying or criticizing single-sex efforts. Proponents maintain that the educational conditions of these children are so devastating that we should study every option to see what will work and what will not. Opponents of the same-sex public school experiments argue that the lack of data should prevent us from doing anything so drastic as waiving civil rights laws. Furthermore, they are already discounting future data by arguing that it will be impossible to determine whether it is the single-sexness of the schools or the increased attention, resources, and talented teachers that will be generated.

It seems to me that the situation is so desperate that if a program can energize and attract teachers and community involvement, whether or not it is a scientific fact that all-boys or all-girls settings are inherently beneficial, then it is worth doing. I also suspect that such experiments will confirm that separating boys and girls can have direct educational benefits. Consider the experience of Shanteria Dixon, a fifth grader in an all-girls' class in Baltimore. What she likes best about the program, she says, is that she can go on trips with her class without "boys disturbing me." She says she is doing better in school now and that she wants to be a lawyer. Maybe she can convince opponents that equal educational opportunities for boys and girls such as herself—even if that means sometimes dividing the boys and the girls—should have the sanction of the law, or at least at the moment, the benefit of the doubt. □

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LATE FOR HIS APPOINTMENTS

ON CLINTON'S WATCH, SLOW'S THE WORD

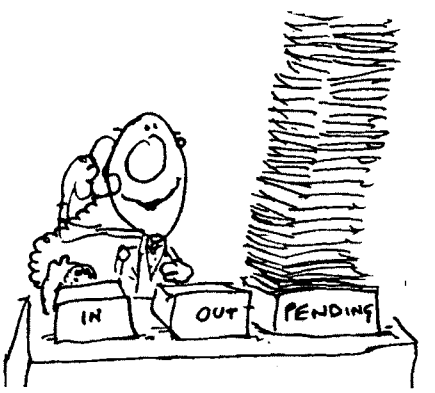
We are well into the second year of the Clinton administration; it's time Lloyd Cutler or someone in the White House told the president to stop frittering away one of his most important powers, the constitutional power to appoint federal office-holders. That may seem an odd piece of advice in the wake of the president's nomination of Stephen Breyer to serve as an associate justice on the Supreme Court.

Judge Breyer's confirmation process will probably be more like a love-in than a hearing. It will surely bear no resemblance to the rough treatment that Judge Robert Bork and Justice Clarence Thomas received when their appointments to the High Court were scrutinized by the Senate Judiciary Committee. For one thing, at the present moment the president and the Senate majority are of the same political party. A Republican president commended the nominations of Bork and Thomas to a Senate controlled by the Democrats.

As a clerk to Justice Arthur Goldberg, whose seat on the Court he has been appointed to occupy, Breyer has been labeled a "liberal" in some media accounts. It surely doesn't hurt Breyer that he's a Democrat or that he served as chief counsel to the Senate Judiciary Committee when Senator Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) chaired it. But Breyer's nomination may actually help to break down the simplistic labeling of judges into political categories, such as "liberal" and "conservative." For example, Senator Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) finds Breyer far more acceptable than he would have Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, a point to which I will return. Breyer's narrow view of the antitrust laws and his commitment to deregulation make him the darling of the Chamber of Commerce. He also has a solid reputation for combining serious attention to the details of the cases before him with a subtle appreciation of the human dimensions of the law. His appointment will cause few, if any, ripples in the Senate, which will probably confirm him in a vote as lopsided as the margin by which Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg was confirmed last year (96-3) or by which Justice Scalia was confirmed eight years ago (98-0).

But the Supreme Court is not the only post subject to the presidential appointment power. The smooth transition of power from one president to another should normally occur within sixty to ninety days at most. When the transition represents an important political shift, as with the shift from Carter to Reagan, the newcomers are usually all the more eager to get their hands on the levers of power as quickly as possible to execute their mandate promptly. The Clinton White House has been curiously sluggish in handling one of the most significant powers of the presidency.

Seventeen months into this administration, there is still squabbling going on about how to fill a number of important positions in the government. For example, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission still lacks a chair. And the National Labor Relations Board got its new chair, Stanford law professor William Gould IV, a few weeks ago, after he had been left dangling in the wind while the White House staff pondered what to do with completely unfounded criticism of him. Gould is widely acknowledged as a renowned scholar in the field of labor law, and his reputation for fairness is exceeded only by that of John Fanning, the able chair of the NLRB for decades, whom President Ronald Reagan sacked promptly after taking over the reins in 1981.



"Hello, Guinness Book of Records..."

Who can forget the fiascos at the Justice Department, first over finding an attorney general who had paid her nanny taxes or who didn't have to because she didn't have any children, and then over Lani Guinier, who wasn't exactly going up for tenure as a law professor, but who was being asked to run the Civil Rights Division?

There are some things that the White House staff still just doesn't get. For example, they obviously don't grasp the benefit of treating ambassadorships as an important political responsibility. I'm not talking about going back to the bad old days excoriated in the 1950s' novel *The Ugly American*, in which the ambassador was embarrassingly ignorant of the language, history, and culture of the host country. I am thinking instead of people like Sargent Shriver in Paris, or Daniel Patrick Moynihan or John Kenneth Galbraith in New Delhi, the sort of people whose sheer intelligence and clout enhance the respect that we have for foreign nations and that they have for us.

In the name of exalting expertise in foreign relations, President Bill Clinton agreed with Secretary of State Warren Christopher to reduce the number of political appointees to ambassadorships drastically from over eighty to only twenty-six. Far from promoting sharper analysis of foreign affairs, this one move represented a capitulation to the foreign service bureaucrats who are rewarded with longevity by their docility to the folks at Foggy Bottom. Under a policy begun in the Carter administration, foreign service officers are subjected to an "up or out" policy which has had the devastating effect of eliminating from the foreign service those with imagination and daring, and guaranteeing the success of the toadies who follow the leader, whoever that might be. Neither the president nor Mr. Christopher seems to grasp the significance of having people at

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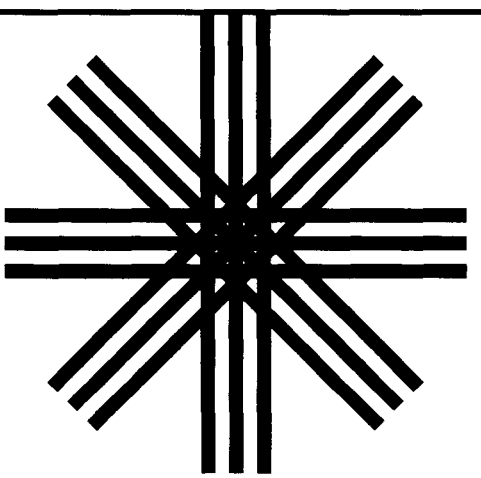
foreign posts who are trusted political advisors, whose cable traffic either of them might actually like to read, and whose phone calls they would certainly return promptly. Is it any wonder that this administration does not yet have a foreign policy?

Of the twenty-six ambassadors to whom political influence is permitted, the president agreed with his wife Hillary that thirteen of these must be women. There is obviously nothing wrong with promoting excellent women to ambassadorships. Jean Kennedy Smith seems to be getting on famously in Dublin, as is Pamela Harriman in Paris. But one of the downsides of the rigid quota system that this administration has adopted is the crippling of the appointment process itself. My point is not that, as a sheer consequence of being out of power for twelve years, there are a lot more than thirteen men in the Democratic party who are capable of serving their country well as ambassadors. That's obvious, but the same can be said of Democratic women. My real gripe is that the nation is ill-served by having so many important posts vacant for so long, which is an inevitable corollary of trying to meet rigid quotas. For example, what message do we send our special friends, the Brits, when we send an ambassador to Dublin, Paris, and Berlin long before we send one to London? (We still do not have an ambassador to the Court of St. James, and rumor has it that the front runner is a retired admiral who is more famous for falling asleep in board rooms than for his acuity as a diplomat; Gilbert and Sullivan would have loved it, but will John Major or his successor?)

Another thing that the White House apparently doesn't yet realize is that federal judges are really appointed by the Senate with the advice and consent of the president. In the power vacuum on appointments created by the Clinton administration, it is no wonder that Republican senators on the Judiciary Committee have required a slowdown in processing the nominations of federal judges at the pace employed by the Judiciary Committee back in 1992, when Senate Democrats tried to frustrate the appointments by President George Bush. What goes around comes around.

To return to the appointment of Judge Breyer to the Supreme Court: while Lloyd Cutler is at the business of impressing the president with the importance of the appointment power, he should deal with the constant leaks of information and disinformation about prospective candidates that have been emanating from the president's staff. These leaks don't need the draconian response of President Richard Nixon's plumbers or of President Reagan's lie detectors. But it is simply appalling that the presidential appointment power, even to such high posts as the Supreme Court, has been reduced to the trial balloon method. That tool may be useful for testing the validity of novel ideas about public policies. It is quite another thing for the White House staff to send one of the most valuable (if one of the most controversial) members of the president's Cabinet, Bruce Babbitt, up the flagpole to see whether anyone will salute him or shoot him down. Ditto for eminently capable judges like Richard Arnold, chief judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, or José Cabranes, chief judge of the United States District Court of Connecticut, or—for that matter—Judge Breyer the last time around.

Instead of providing bold, "take-charge" leadership in an Oval Office that knows how to move the ball on appointments, the Clinton administration has been plagued by a hesitant and clumsy bunch of neophytes in the basement of the White House who squabble with one another about manifestly illegal quotas, and who haven't yet comprehended that the president and the nation would be better served by a big cork placed firmly in their very indiscreet mouths. This may be the first time in the history of the presidency that rigor mortis in the White House staff has actually caused the death of the body. □



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Deadline: October 3, 1994. Announcement of Prize: December 16, 1994. The prize-winning essay will be published in COMMONWEAL's January 13, 1995, issue. This essay will become the property of the Graymoor Ecumenical & Interreligious Institute. All other essays will be returned to their authors after January 1.

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WHO PAYS THE PRICE FOR FREE TRADE?

FARMERS, WORKERS, THE UNEMPLOYED

JORDAN BISHOP

Questions have been raised repeatedly in certain quarters concerning linkage between human rights and trade privileges; most recently, the principal areas concerned have been China and Mexico. And while some concern is occasionally heard from government sources, most of the noise comes either from human rights nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) or from groups opposed to the exportation of manufacturing jobs to the third world under agreements such as NAFTA. When governments are involved, they often appear to be highly selective in their concerns for human rights. Departments of trade and industry, perhaps rightly, do not feel that human rights are part of their brief. When Canada's Prime Minister, Jean Chrétien, visited Mexico in March, the question of Mexican human rights problems and the events of Chiapas in January were fresh in people's minds, although an agreement had apparently been reached between the Mexican government and the Mayan leaders of Chiapas. For his part, Mr. Chrétien never raised the question of human rights. His visit to Mexico was concerned with trade. With the assassination of Luis Donaldo Colosio, the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) candidate for the Mexican presidency in this summer's elections, Chrétien's chief concern appeared to be that rumors of political instability might dampen enthusiasms for Canadian investment in Mexico under the newly signed NAFTA agreement.

Warren Christopher's problems with China gave rise to similar questions. Unlike Mr. Chrétien, he chose to raise the question of human rights when he visited China in March, and was told that this was none of his business. Both in China and Mexico the casual observer might be forgiven for speculating as to what is involved in our concern for human rights. In other words, are we talking *linkage* or *leverage*? When our governments do raise questions concerning human rights, are they linking human rights with trade, or cynically using the question of human rights to gain trade concessions? If Mr. Chrétien refuses to do either, it may well be to his credit. After all, except for fringe groups on the left, one hardly ever hears of any concern for human rights in (say) Indonesia or East Timor. Guatemala is nearly forgotten. In South Korea we are more concerned with maintaining its military potential against the threat from the North. Perhaps we do not need to raise the question of human rights in these places; we have what we want already: a safe haven for investment for our own transnational corporations, a pool of cheap labor, and a stable political environment for trade and investment.

Beyond this, there is a deeper contradiction. Both in China and in Mexico there is another linkage, one that cannot be made or unmade in Washington or Ottawa. In both places problems with human rights are exacerbated by development policies pursued by those countries, policies which are vigorously supported and praised by governments in the United States and Canada. One might even say, given the pressures from the International Monetary Fund and other agencies, that these policies are *imposed* by our governments, through their strong influence in these agencies. While one hears talk of markets in both Mexico and China, the labor market is of primary concern for many investors. Here there is, with the favored development policy defined as export-led free market capitalism, considerable pressure to depress wages; industrial production is principally for export, not for home consumption. And all this, as a Chinese ministry for social affairs noted in a recent report, can only lead to an increase in poverty, unemployment, and social unrest. And this is perhaps even more the case in Mexico, where it is estimated that five million *campesinos* will be added to the urban population as a result of the neoliberal economic policies enshrined in NAFTA.

Some of these *campesinos* may find employment. A majority will not. Already, many of the workers in the *maquiladora* are young, female, and short-term. For their men, cheap subsidized corn from the United States and the new agricultural policies of the Mexican economic miracle have already made agriculture, for them, a no-win adventure. So they move to the cities to join the ranks of the urban unemployed. There is also, for some, the safety valve of emigration to the United States or Canada. But while our governments have welcomed NAFTA, and indeed, worked hard to get NAFTA signed and delivered,

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we are less enthusiastic about absorbing the surplus population created by NAFTA, despite the fact that most of the immigrants, like those in the past, are hard-working, frugal, and self-motivated people who are willing to undertake work that most descendants of older waves of immigration are not interested in doing.

Henry Ford's genial notion of paying his workers $5 a day so that they could buy his cars is no longer the rule in the post-modern division of labor. Today's underclass is lucky to get the legal minimum wage; in Mexico its members live by their wits. In Adam Smith's day no one thought it odd that the craftsmen who made carriages for the wealthy could never ride in one. Today most workers in Mexican industry are unable to buy the products of their labor, most of which are in any case sold abroad. Except for some privileged elites, eighteenth-century workers were poor, and if they fell below the subsistence level, they were forced to beg or steal, just as are many Latin Americans today. Adam Smith cites a seventeenth-century magistrate to the effect that those whose labor did not bring in the ten shillings a week required to support a family of six—"the father and mother, two children able to do something, two not able"—"must make it up either by begging or stealing" (*The Wealth of Nations*). Smith obviously sympathized with the working poor, and was even somewhat optimistic, although he noted that while combinations of workers to raise wages were severely punished, combinations of masters to keep wages low went unnoticed. Theft was the common strategy for supplementing low or inadequate wages. It can be argued that the lower classes in most third-world countries are in a similar situation, along with increasing numbers in developed countries. In most Latin American countries, one routinely removes windshield wipers and locks them inside when a car is parked. In many North American cities, one has to take similar precautions with a car radio. Petty crime is all too often a question of survival.

From discussions about the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and NAFTA it appears that those whose advice is most effectively heard by governments are not worried by the fall of real wages. In Canada and the United States, one now hears more often of a "recovery without jobs." And while things are not as bad as they were in eighteenth-century Europe or in the third world today, it is obvious that consumer demand cannot be maintained at the levels we are accustomed to. In the current recession, Statistics Canada noted a rise in consumer spending, but added that it was financed by savings. It is now a foregone conclusion that the consumer society as we have known it may be enjoyed by working classes only if several adults in a family are working. The days of stay-at-home housewives are as foreign to today's working class as they were to those of the 1840s in England. Unemployment over 10 percent is now declared to be the natural rate in Canada, and it is a given that jobs lost to the South—whether this be the South of the United States, Mexico, or other low-wage areas—as a result of these agreements are gone for good.

For the ideologues of neoconservatism this is not a problem. A spokesman for Canada's Fraser Institute (a neoconservative think-tank in British Columbia) declared that the Canadian economy could do without any manufacturing sector. In the developed countries, in spite of recent riots in Paris over a lower minimum wage, it is assumed that the combination of more police, more prisons, a well-disciplined media, and increasing political apathy will enable the economy to function with lower wages, lower welfare and unemployment insurance rates, more nonunion jobs, and other features of "lean-mean" capitalism. While we in Canada and the United States deal with theft by having the highest prison populations in the developed world, begging is becoming more and more common. Today the streets of Ottawa remind me of those of La Paz, Bolivia, in the 1950s, and Ottawa is one of our more prosperous cities.

To the South, matters are even worse. When we first began to think about economic development, import substitution was the common strategy for third-world industrialization. For today's theorists, import substitution involves unacceptable protectionist practices, since its success depends on the protection of nascent enterprise from foreign competition. This means in fact the subsidizing of inefficient, or, at least, less efficient industries. But it did create some pressure for higher wages so that there would be greater effective demand for local manufactures. With export-led development this pressure, ineffective as it was, is entirely gone. There is active international competition for the *lowest* wages, and ideas such as community loyalty are regarded as relics of pre-industrial societies.

This very competition provides a strong incentive—or should we say a strong temptation—to governments to discourage such activities as union organizing to the point where real human rights problems arise, and indeed have already arisen in many places. Union organizing is not tolerated. If necessary, death squads will be employed to deter union organizing. Given the way the international labor market works today, this is almost "necessary." If wages are allowed to rise, the industry will move elsewhere. We tend to associate this with fly-by-night operations, but if we think twice we can recall countless serious and sophisticated industrial operations in Ontario, Quebec, and the American rust bowl that have packed up and moved South in the past ten years. We used to think of ghost towns in terms of mining, logging, resource industries. Now, as often as not, they are industrial.

Neoliberal policy (in North America it is called neoconservative policy) is centered on the conviction that the discipline of the market is necessary for economic efficiency. In 1944 Karl Polanyi published *The Great Transformation* (Beacon Press, 1954), a book dedicated to the thesis that a society integrated by a self-regulating market inevitably creates self-destructive pressures, so that historically, toward the end of the nineteenth century, conservative governments, in self-defense, introduced the beginnings of what we now know as the welfare state: workmen's compensation, health insurance, minimum-wage legislation, abolition of child labor, legalization of unions, and other measures which all tend to *protect small players from the destructive forces of the market.* Orthodox economists deplore these measures as "market imperfections," but as John Kenneth Galbraith noted in response to a Hungarian journalist with re-

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spect to Friedrich Hayek's market model, "...it was a design that we in the West would not care to risk" (*Manchester Guardian Weekly*, February 4, 1990). We try to maintain at least the rhetoric of equality as a social ideal, but markets do not lead to equality. On the contrary, they systematically exacerbate social inequalities unless their impact is limited by social legislation, trade unions, and other "market imperfections." We have forgotten our history; everywhere there are strong pressures to rollback the welfare state, which, it is said, we can no longer afford. We expose ourselves to the destructive dimension of market economics. And in third-world countries, one form that this destructive tendency takes is that of systematic abuse of human rights.

The January events of Chiapas were triggered by Mexico's economic reforms, that is, by a concerted effort to install lean-mean capitalism on a national scale, including the commercialization of the communal lands (*ejidos*) of native communities. In the reforms of the 1850s, this led to the loss of land by indigenous communities and individuals, the formation of the *hacienda* system (the Spanish colonial regime had protected the communal lands of indigenous communities), debt peonage, and eventually, to the revolution of 1910. Zapata's cry of *tierra o muerte* is now heard again. We have come full circle. When land is defined as a commodity under these conditions, it is almost inevitable that arable land possessed by indigenous communities or individuals will be taken over by more powerful players in the marketplace—*haciendados* in the nineteenth century, modern capitalist agriculture today. In Chiapas, the reaction was only to be expected. But even after Chiapas, the commercialization of *ejido* lands stands as part of Mexico's neoliberal policy. Peasant agriculture stands condemned as inefficient, and the peasants feel strongly that they are condemned with it. Their only recourse is to join the ranks of the urban unemployed, living by their wits beyond the margins of society.

There was a time when, in discussions on third-world development, many in the South read the European and North American message as: "We had our nineteenth century; now you can go and have one too!" This can be true in more ways than one. The logic of a society completely integrated by a self-regulating market is to create the possibility and often the reality of economic growth, while also creating a permanent underclass of poverty, since the benefits of growth flow in greatest share to the local and distant elites who control the process. And this leads inevitably to serious human-rights problems. As is well known, in Brazil hundreds of teen-agers, and even younger children, living by their wits in the cities, have been eliminated by death squads. They do not murder children as a public service; there is a *market* for their services, just as there is no place in the market for their victims. For these children, as for the family mentioned by Adam Smith, crime and begging are the only means of survival. There is nothing else. Neoliberal policy and reliance on the market makes it worse, although attempts by governments or NGOs to remedy the situation are often met by serious capital flight on the part of the elites.

The situation is in fact desperate, and while one cannot blame neoliberal strategies for all of it, they have made the situation worse, not only in the third world but in developed areas as well. Already there has been a reaction in Britain, from within the Conservative party, to Thatcher's lean-mean capitalism, although critics would argue that the return to a universal market discipline begun under Thatcher is still extremely destructive. To cite one example, social assistance costs have increased phenomenally. In Ontario, after ten years of neoconservative rule, they have doubled. Some of this is simply the recession, but the way in which the economy was managed is a significant part of it.

This is not inevitable. In East Asia, the "Tigers" have pursued their development with vigorous industrial policies that have no place in the "pure" market model. Like Galbraith, they have been unwilling to let the market make all their development decisions, and they have defended their institutions against the ideologies of free trade. And we should not forget that for Polanyi the market is not simply a *natural* institution. It is created by legislation.

All this obviously goes beyond the problem of human rights as we usually define it. Western nations have always been skeptical about the cluster of economic and social rights in the UN declaration of 1948. Yet the negation of these rights almost inevitably leads to actions, on the part of those deprived, that are met with a real denial of political and civil rights. Any effective political and social organization on the part of the poor is opposed by force. Such organization is incompatible with a market-driven society. It is not to be allowed, because it necessarily limits the scope of the market, and the market is sacred. It also involves some hard social choices. This is hardly a new discovery. "Capitalism as a means toward freedom and equality," wrote Peter Drucker in 1939, "had been proved illusory by 1848..." (*The End of Economic Man*). There will be no end to this problem, since people will not give up in their search for freedom and equality. Can the developed nations impose their own standards of human rights on developing nations even as they impose policies that make human rights impossible to realize? Perhaps we need to look again at our basic policy decisions. They promise nothing but trouble in third-world nations, and we face serious problems at home. Have we "won" the cold war only to be defeated by our own propaganda? □

John Nixon, Jr.

Blessed Were the Poor

During the Great Depression
About the only thing
Affordable was good taste.
So we had that. It took
Us several decades
To realize that's why
The era was called Great

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WORKERS OF THE HEMISPHERE, UNITE!

YOUR WAGES DEPEND ON IT

ALBERT A. BLUM
JANET M. TANSKI

Now that NAFTA has passed (despite labor's active opposition), the union movement in the United States should be wondering what it might have done differently and what it should do now. The AFL-CIO's diagnosis of the weaknesses of NAFTA was correct. Despite all the various statistical guesses about NAFTA's potential overall effect on jobs and wages, there is no question that there will be a loss of some jobs in some locations in the United States. Moreover, if the recent past is a prologue to the near future, Mexican workers will not be better off as a result of trade liberalization in Mexico.

The status of workers in Mexico loomed large in the NAFTA debate because the U.S. labor movement argued that the low wages paid Mexican workers would entice U.S. firms to move south of the border and U.S. workers would, as a result, lose their jobs. NAFTA's supporters responded that the free trade agreement's passage would increase the number of jobs in the United States because of the greater demand for U.S. goods. Moreover, the growth in trade would push Mexican workers' wages up, thereby making Mexico less attractive to U.S. firms. And as the gap between wages paid to Mexican and U.S. workers narrowed, Mexicans would also be less likely to emigrate (legally or illegally) to the United States.

The future will tell who was correct in this debate. We do know now, however, that in the past decade, Mexico has already been following a policy of expanding foreign trade through trade liberalization programs such as the reduction of tariffs. It also lessened restrictions on foreign ownership and investments and diversified its exports. It strengthened its manufacturing sector as a part of the plan to integrate Mexico into the world economy and reduce its dependence on oil exports. President Salinas de Gortari's crusade to have NAFTA approved was only the latest example of his trade liberalization program. But despite all of these efforts, liberalization has not improved the lot of Mexican workers, according to the following data collected by ECLAC, the UN's Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, and INEGI, the Mexican government's statistical bureau.

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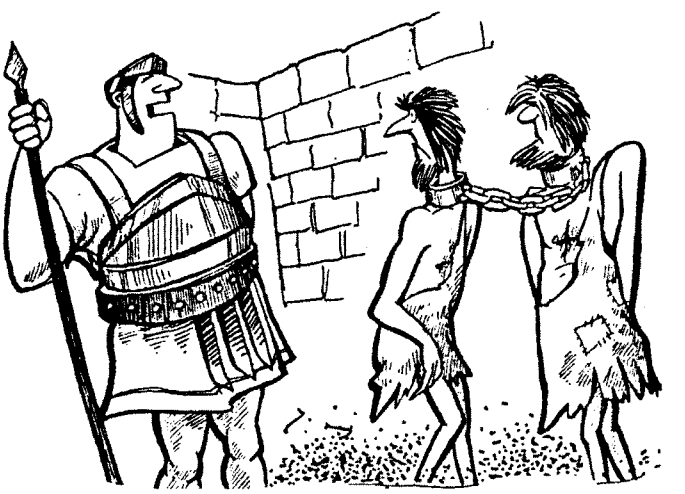
- From 1980 to 1990, the percentage of Mexicans lacking sufficient resources to meet basic needs steadily increased from 26.3 percent to 49.2 percent of the population.
- While Mexican worker productivity increased by 349 percent between 1982 and 1991, the purchasing power of the minimum wage paid Mexicans dropped by 73 percent between 1982 and 1992.
- Approximately 55 percent of Mexican workers earn no more than the minimum wage which is not only one of the lowest figures for real wages in Mexican history but is also among the lowest in the world.
- The rich in Mexico during the past decade have grown rich while the poor have grown poorer. The lowest 40 percent of Mexican households saw their income-share drop from 14.3 percent in 1984 to 12 percent in 1989 while the incomes of the top 10 percent increased from 32.8 percent to 37.9.
- Even though the manufacturing sector's exports have grown and are considered an important part of Mexico's restructuring strategy, total employment in manufacturing in August 1992 was only 83.7 percent of what it had been in 1980.
- Real wages paid to workers in the manufacturing sector have declined. In 1992, the purchasing power of manufacturing workers' wages on average was only 60 percent of what it had been in 1980.



"The lions have the day off. We're throwing you to the productivity analysts instead."

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Thus Mexico's recent past indicates that the increased trade expected to occur as a result of NAFTA's passage will not automatically raise the standard of living for the Mexican poor and workers. United States companies will, therefore, easily find desperate Mexican workers, eager to work for those U.S. firms wishing to relocate south of the border. In fact, the situation may even become more troublesome since increased trade liberalization may cause even more wealth for the few and comparatively less for the many in Mexico, thereby provoking increased political tension and unrest (as is evidenced by the assassination of the leading presidential candidate and the troubles in the state of Chiapas).

If most Mexican workers will not benefit from NAFTA's passage, what will its effect be on jobs in the United States? There have been varying estimates of how many American jobs might be lost to Mexico, from a low of about 11,250 suggested by Secretary of Labor Robert Reich to a (hotly contested) high of 5.9 million projected by Ross Perot and his associate, Pat Choate. The figures most commonly cited range from 200,000 to 500,000 jobs lost.

Clearly no one really knows how many jobs will disappear. But even many business executives believe there will be a considerable number of jobs lost. Thus, when President Bill Clinton urged U.S. company executives to promise that they would not move jobs from the United States to Mexico, they refused. The company officials clearly did not want to be ultimately caught with their promises showing.

The United States labor movement was thus justifiably concerned about the effects of NAFTA. But was its opposition to the passage of NAFTA the proper approach to follow?

It is true that if NAFTA had been defeated, some U.S. jobs would have been saved. However, economic forces in the world economy would have continued to create pressure for the globalization of production and the integration of markets. As a stage in this process of globalization, regional trade blocs are forming. An example of this is NAFTA, and, thus, in the long run, NAFTA or an equivalent probably would have been inevitable. In fact, NAFTA's regional bloc has provided a not-yet-lost opportunity for the U.S. labor movement, namely, that U.S. unions move toward some real integration with unions in Mexico.

When U.S. industry began to move from local to national markets in the middle of the last century, unions came to recognize the need to cooperate nationally and local unions joined together to form national unions. They saw that unorganized workers in one area received lower wages than unionized workers in another. To prevent the low-wage area from dominating the market, unions realized that they had to motivate workers in both regions to join together in one union so that they could cooperate to narrow the wage differentials.

Now we are moving increasingly into international markets and toward a global economy. Companies recognize this trend and follow the dollar wherever it can be made. Whatever the

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pronouncements by union leaders about workers of the world uniting, real cooperation among unions generally stops at national borders. But as U.S. labor once met the threat to its strength when national markets developed by trying to have local unions in different parts of the United States join together, so too must U.S. unions learn really to cooperate (and not just attend meetings) with unions in other countries.

The main union federation in Mexico is the CTM, which is part of the Mexican political system (that is, it is a segment of the PRI, the political party that has run Mexico for decades). CTM has done little that would antagonize the political or economic powers that make up the PRI in Mexico. As a result, Mexican workers are often dissatisfied with the little help they receive from CTM unions.

U.S. labor, which played such an important role in helping European unions after World War II, ought to do the same for CTM and the independent Mexican unions. Wage increases that would narrow the gap between Mexican and U.S. workers is one place to begin. Perhaps through a form of trade-union "joint venture," the AFL-CIO, the CTM, and independent unions could join in labor negotiations and strike agreements, creating pressure (as some are beginning to do) on both governments. To help those workers in both countries negatively affected by NAFTA is another starting point. In short, U.S. and Mexican labor must try to circumvent the potential negative impacts of free trade on wages and jobs, the same way that U.S. unions protected wages for automobile workers in Michigan and California. Unions on each side of the border have to struggle together to secure contracts that will insure that wages are not determined solely and inexorably by the international marketplace. Failure to cooperate will only mean that the downward trend in the strength of U.S. labor will continue and the ineffectiveness of Mexican unions will be accentuated.

Such cooperation is beginning. The Teamsters and the United Electrical workers have joined hands with FAT (a federation of Mexican unions not affiliated with CTM) in opposing decisions by General Electric and Honeywell to fire more than a hundred workers in Mexican plants. FAT further told the U.S. Steelworkers Union that it is seeking "ways in which [to] cooperate and coordinate with counterparts in the United States" to limit the flow of capital across the border that could harm U.S. and Mexican workers. The Steelworkers' retiring president, Lynn Williams, agreed with FAT and declared that his union "intends to do all we can to keep Mexico from becoming a haven for...runaway companies looking for low wages."

Some U.S. unions are already helping Mexican workers form labor organizations, such as the one created recently at the Plastico Baja California plant, a subsidiary of the Boston-based Carlisle Plastics. And a few organizations, like the Border Committee of Women Workers, have formed to foster cooperation among Mexican and U.S. workers.

But these are only baby steps. NAFTA ought to energize unions on both sides of the border to act out the principle of "solidarity in case of repression." Some U.S. unions are using the vague appeal procedures, added to NAFTA by Clinton to placate labor, to fight companies whose programs hurt labor on either side of the border. But too many unions are still issuing platitudes about "unionism without borders." Workers of the world need to unite, not because Marx said so, but because the growth of world markets demands it. They have to learn to emulate management's ability to cooperate across borders while they are still strong enough to do so. □

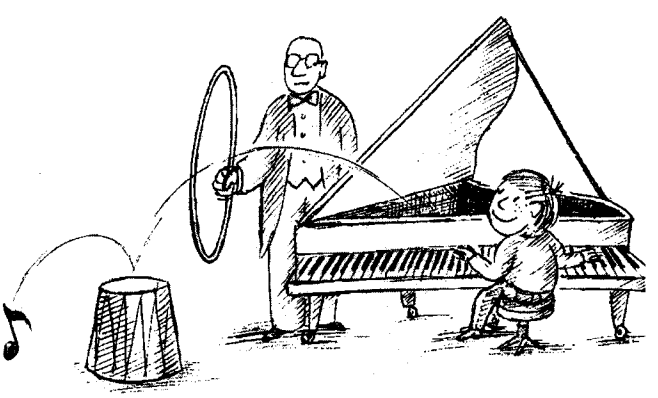
SCREEN

GOULD'S VARIATIONS

THIRTY-TWO TAKES

His two versions of Bach's *Goldberg Variations* bracketed the recording career of Glenn Gould. The first, released in 1956 with thirty-two contact-sheet photos of a glistening, music-possessed young man on its cover, gained him international celebrity. The second performance, a quarter of a century later, dreamier and even more innovative than the first, was the last Gould record released in his lifetime. And this album's photograph shows a fifty-year-old man so haggard and troubled that he seems to be envisioning the stroke that will kill him in a few months.

For the liner notes of the first version, Gould wrote a remarkable analysis in which he called the variations "music which observes neither end nor beginning, music with neither real climax nor real resolution, music which, like Baudelaire's lovers, 'rests lightly on the wings of the unchecked wind.'" Whether or not that's an accurate account of the music, it is certainly a just description of the structure of *Thirty-two Short Films about Glenn Gould*, François Girard's brilliant evocation of Gould's singularity. Though there is a certain rough linearization here (childhood scenes early, premonitions of death near the fade-



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out, etc.), this is not a straightforward narrative straining toward a climax. There is no psychologizing. There isn't even a particularly intimate view of the protagonist. After an opening in which Gould walks toward the camera through a barren wintry landscape while the aria from *Goldberg* is heard on the soundtrack, we watch thirty self-contained movies about thirty aspects of the pianist's life. Each one is a variation on the theme of aloneness as practised by the Canadian musician. Not loneliness, mind you. Aloneness. Its joys and costs. Ninety minutes later, we watch another shot of Gould in the same winterscape and this time he's moving away from the camera. Aria, variation, aria.

It's hard for me to think of any recent movie to equal this one's economy and purposefulness. Each of the thirty-two scenes moves with absolute assurance of rhythm and design to make its point. But it's also hard to think of any other recent movie with "points" so ineffable, so complex, so resistant to literary paraphrase.

Consider an early sequence dealing with Gould's childhood. In a vacation cottage facing a lake, the boy, scarcely more than a toddler, begins playing under his mother's tutelage. Close to the camera, he sits in her lap and she gently guides his fingers over the keys. We feel the emotional inextricability of maternal warmth and artistic stirrings. And, in the far right corner of the shot, the head and torso of the father working on the lawn or in the garden is visible through an open window. At first, we may feel some Freudian or Jungean paradigm is being mounted here. Doesn't the nurturing but perhaps smothering mother represent creativity and beauty to her son while the masculine parent, laboring at his sweaty, "manly" task, stands for the harsh unheeding world? But no, this simpleminded opposition just won't do. The first scene is immediately qualified, almost contradicted, by the two following. The little boy is discovered at the lakeside pier, feet dangling over the water, blissfully doing incredibly complicated multiplication problems out loud while the adult Gould wonders on the soundtrack what his intellectual fate would have been if his mother hadn't guided him to music. The strangeness and potency of this child's mind outstrip parental promptings. Next, we see both parents as amazed voyeurs of their son's singularity. They stand together outside a parlor and peek inside at the boy listening in rapture to a radio broadcast of Toscanini conducting orchestral excerpts from *Tristan und Isolde*. Tears course down his cheeks. The final effect of this entire childhood sequence is to render Gould opaque but fascinating. It presents intellectual and artistic power as a mystery unexplainable by any theory. (In point of fact, both parents encouraged their son's musicality. Mr. Gould even built a sawed-off chair that accommodated Glenn's eyes-level-with-the-key posture.)

There are sequences that parallel or echo or reverse other ones. For instance, the image of amazed parents I described above is echoed by scenes in which we see people coming into contact with Gould through work or chance and being touched in some manner by his strangeness and the beauty that strangeness helped create. In a hotel room, a shy chambermaid is coaxed by the pianist to listen to a recording of Beethoven he's just made. She's somewhat frightened at first, then moved. A stagehand on the verge of retirement asks for the artist's autograph just before a concert and is amiably quizzed by Gould about how he'll spend his increased leisure time. Then, looking at the autograph, the stagehand is startled to find that beneath the signature Gould has announced his own retirement from concertizing. A stockbroker is amazed to learn, on a bearish Wall Street afternoon, that Gould is the only one of his clients to have made a killing. Putting down the phone after delivering the good news, he shakes his head in bemusement and mutters, "Piano player, ha...piano player."

Certain other sequences draw us closer to Gould but not in the usual manner of fiction films. No flashbacks to childhood traumas or wrestling matches with lovers. Instead, we tap into Gould's consciousness as he mentally organizes the conversations going on in a highway diner into a sort of verbal music; we go into his medicine cabinet for a montage-ballet of pills which sums up the pianist's increasing addiction; and Gould's very body is the subject of a sequence composed of x-ray shots of the musician's deteriorating condition. It may seem intrusive to go literally under a man's skin, yet somehow the effect is less so than if the director had invented dreams and motivations.

The Canadian actor, Colm Feore, does not do a virtuoso make-up artist's impersonation but captures the rhythms of his sub-

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Michael Cuddihy

Listening to Beethoven's Piano and Cello Sonata in A Major

Moonlight prevents the leaves from stirring.
"You can almost see to read the paper"—
Her voice like light off a mirror.
"We are starting to eat the leaves from the trees"—
A dirt farmer warns from Ethiopia.
Beside me, the woman withdraws
Into a pitch of concentration, mind
Incandescent as paper under a magnifying glass.
"For men who love women," wrote Beethoven
Over the score of this bold, wrenching sonata.
Already, he could feel the world beginning to close down,
Its bright promise eclipsed,
Another page from the text of the old discolored moon
Shot through with contradiction, the parchment
Scribbled over until it becomes crazed, unreadable.
Like parched soil, the fine network of cracks—

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ject: the legato of the almost creamy baritone voice and the strange, slightly hunched gait which always reminded me, perhaps not so oddly, of the bearing of Richard Nixon, another self-isolated creature.

What will people who know nothing of Glenn Gould make of this movie? For them, the spectacle of his oddness will not be mitigated by those "human interest" facts that Gould fans like myself pick up from interviews and articles: Gould reading *Mad* magazine to a friend's little boy and doing all the crazy voices with gusto; his star-struck joy at being visited in his studio by one of his idols, Barbra Streisand, while his conductor, Stokowski, fumes at the interruption; or the little Glenn Gould, inspired by World War II movies, picturing himself as the dauntless captain of cargo ships menaced by German subs. I can't help regretting that these glimpses of the surprisingly normal, lovable side of Gould didn't get into this movie (some of them are in the good but conventional CBC documentary, *Glenn Gould: A Portrait)*, but it must be kept in mind that François Girard deliberately chose just those elements of the pianist's life that would contribute to a portrait of a glorious and harrowing solitude.

At the end of my review of Richard Attenborough's wretched icon of a screen biography, *Chaplin* (February 12, 1993), I wrote, "Charles Chaplin would have loved this movie. That's what is wrong with it." Well, Glenn Gould, I venture, would have loved this movie for its purity of design, its use of variation form, and—perhaps most of all—for its respect for human strangeness.

And that's what is *right* with this movie.

RICHARD ALLEVA

MEDIA

SUPERPERSONS

'LOIS AND CLARK'

What—*more* about Superman? Give us a break, why dontcha? It's a *comic book*, for crying out loud, and a comic book read by *kids*, not by the law-school-bound collegiate recovering nerds who follow the baroque intricacies of serious comic-book stuff like Peter Milligan's *Shade: The Changing Man* or Garth Ennis's *Hellblazer* or—a true and emerging work of high art—Neil Gaiman's *Sandman*.

But *Superman*? Even the name, after all these years, sounds camp. We don't really like to use it without an ironic cock of the eyebrow, now do we? And thereby, I suggest, hangs a large part of the psychic history of America in the fifty years since the Big Guy in the Blue Suit with the Red Skivvies first made his appearance.

By the way. This is a piece about the ABC series, "Lois and Clark: The New Adventures of Superman," which has just wound up its first season and which is, no kidding, one of the best things—smart and poignant—you can watch on the Tube.

Siegel and Shuster, the scrawny teens from Cleveland who invented the Superman mythos in 1938, probably had no idea that they were conjuring with a Name that played a central role in the visionary system of the great Nietzsche, and that, defaced and perverted, was playing an even greater role in the formation of the Third Reich. The boys from Cleveland just wanted to sell their idea for a comic book: and so they did. But Names, as any real adept will tell you, are delicate, dangerous things to play around with. Be careful what you call: it may come.

The timing could not have been more perfect. Just as the battalions of the Nazi *Übermenschen*, "splendid blonde beasts" in the classic and nauseating phrase, arose from Berlin to Munich, on the other side of the Atlantic emerged an absurd, crudely-drawn, quite embarrassingly adolescent fantasy of omnipotence disguised as wimpiness which, to Dr. Goebbels, say, would have been just one more proof of the essential sickliness of permissive, Jew-infested America. (Never mind that as Superman he was about as *goyische* as you could get: when he put on those horn-rims and became insecure, fidgety Clark Kent he was—the name notwithstanding—pure *Yeshiva-bucher.*)

The funny thing is—and I'm quite serious about this—I think Superman may have been an essential part of the war effort (at least our part of it—let's not forget that Russia had at least a 60-percent share of the agony of defeat and the thrill of victory). The comic began in 1939, so it's a safe bet that a lot of the kids—and they *were* kids—who went off to fight on other planets like Anzio and Bastogne and Guadalcanal had stored, somewhere in their imaginations, the myth of the just-ordinary guy who, when danger threatened, emerged from the cocoon of the quotidian as the invincible defender of the right. Watch any of the numerous propaganda movies made during the war and notice how the plot, though "Superman" is never mentioned, follows the rhythm of the myth: every G.I. is a Clark Kent, with a Kal-El inside him screaming to get out. In fact, the best movie ever made about World War II, William Wyler's 1946 *The Best Years of Our Lives,* becomes even more plangent when you think of its story of three returning veterans as the plight of Kal-El forced to hang up the cape and for the rest of his life be just—well—good old Clark.

Of course, by 1946 we *were* Superman. We had the Bomb. The country that had invented the strongest man on earth was now the strongest country on earth. And the nation would come to find its omnipotence quite as difficult to live with as did its secret self-image, the man in the red cape. What's worse than being *only* Clark, you ask? Well, being *only* Superman: for sure.

Global Policeman, Guardian of the New World Order (George Bush's witless phrase), or Defender of Truth, Justice, and the American Way: the formulas, geopolitical and comic-book, have an uncanny internal resonance one with the other. For almost a half-century, I suggest, America has suffered from the cold-war disease, which can also be called "Supermanism": the overwrought anxiety to use great power for a

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great good, and the unending frustration of never finding a *clear* great good. For fifty years we haven't taken off the red cape: no wonder our room is a mess and our nerves are frazzled.

Which is why "Lois and Clark: The New Adventures of Superman" is such a joy. I don't really think that the writers and producers sat down to create a "Superman" for the world-rhythms of the nineties; but I do believe that sometimes the right stories *get themselves told* for the right age: and "Lois and Clark" is that.

Two significant things about the title (besides, of course, the *terrific* fifth-grade pun on the seekers of the Northwest Passage): *Lois* (Lane, if you're a visiting Martian) comes first; and, maybe more significant, it's *Clark,* not Clark's demideity alter-ego, who's featured—not just in the main title, but in the unfolding of the episodes themselves. *This* Superman *wants* to make it without the red cape and the blue body-stocking. In fact, a running gag in the series is that "Superman" appears remarkably infrequently: in most episodes, whatever the *problem du jour* happens to be, Lois and Clark (that's Clark as Clark) will have mainly sorted things out to the point that Supe's requisite appearance is almost inessential. The classic Superman scenario—and the classic American foreign policy scenario—is that of the last-minute rescue: *Into* the phone booth! *Change*! *Cap* the volcano! Stroll back on the set with your horn-rims on. But here Clark often does quite as well as Clark as he does as you-know-who.

Chesterton, who I think knew nearly everything about nearly everything, once said that the test of a really good religion was that you could make jokes about it. Maybe what I find so inspiriting about "Lois and Clark" is that it *is* a joke, and a gentle and affectionate one, about the megalomania of the Superman ethos. But like all really good jokes, it does not diminish its object as much as it humanizes it.

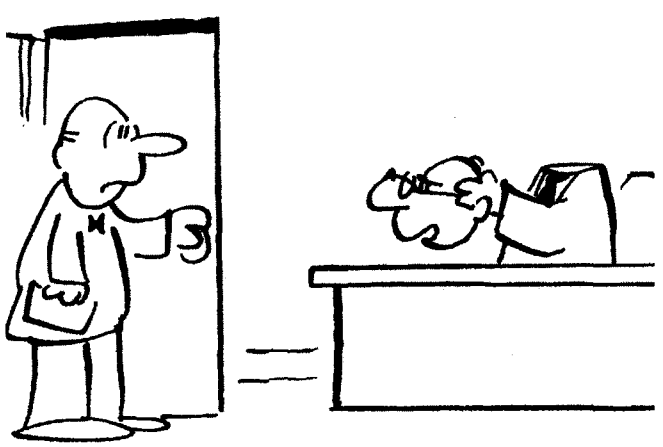
Clark/Superman is played by Dean Cain, who has none of the granite-statuary handsomeness of Christopher Reeve, but an irrepressible smartass grin, in or out of the supersuit: he's *already*, in other words, more Clark than Clark's other, and capable of smiling wryly at both incarnations. Lois is Teri Hatcher—about whom, in the immortal words of Roy Orbison, "rrrrowwrrr!"—and who, for the first time in *any* version of the tale, is at least as smart as the mild-mannered reporter who is her partner. *This* Lois and *this* Clark really like one another, and are constantly fencing, with equal wit on both sides, about the fact that sooner or later they are going to tumble into the sack, and *not* because she's going to find out that he's really Superman. Lane Smith is Perry White, who refreshingly swears, instead of "Great Caesar's Ghost!" "Great Shades of Elvis!" And Superman's archenemy, Lex Luthor, is played with perfect Donald Trump-reptilian arrogance by the veteran John Shea.

It's wonderful ensemble acting, and even when the individual episodes are dumb—we're not talking *Anna Karenina* here—there's a sense of high fun that, even on the Tube, can't be faked.

But it's also, as we surf into the next century, the demythologization of a myth. It's the assertion that Clark—the Clark in all of us—*matters* more than the Superman in all of us: that it's less important for us to be the strongest than it is for us to be the most human: that the quotidian—the cities, the hungry, the ordinary—is not just the *husk* of the divine, but its heart. In its small but shining way, "Lois and Clark" plays with one of our central determining myths, and tells us that, in this age and the world, it's time to stop worrying about our superpowers, hang the red cape for a while, and start cleaning our room.

There may be better series on TV. I doubt very much if there is one more quirkily relevant to the state of the nation.

FRANK McCONNELL



"Blast it, Stanhope—I've told you never to enter this room without knocking!"

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Therefore, choose life: and work at it

A WHOLE NEW LIFE
An Illness and a Healing
Reynolds Price
Atheneum, $20, 214 pp.

Joanne Brannon Aldridge

Few writers are as generous in sharing themselves and their experiences as Reynolds Price. In *Clear Pictures: First Loves, First Guides* he told us of his childhood, adolescence, and early manhood. In *A Common Room: Essays 1954-1987*, he offered opinions, convictions, and feelings over three decades. Now, in *A Whole New Life: An Illness and a Healing*, he shares the most recent decade of his life: his "midlife collision with cancer and paralysis," the means by which he survived, and the responsibility he took for *A Whole New Life* for himself.

His account is a compelling and riveting story although that is not his first aim. Rather, he says, he intends "to give an honest narrative, a true record of the visible and invisible ways in which one fairly normal creature entered a trial not of his own choosing and emerged after four long years on a new life....The record is offered first to others in physical or psychic trials of their own, to their families and other helpers.... At best," he writes, "I'm a companionable voice that's lasted beyond all rational expectation. My ongoing life may be a fact others can lean on."

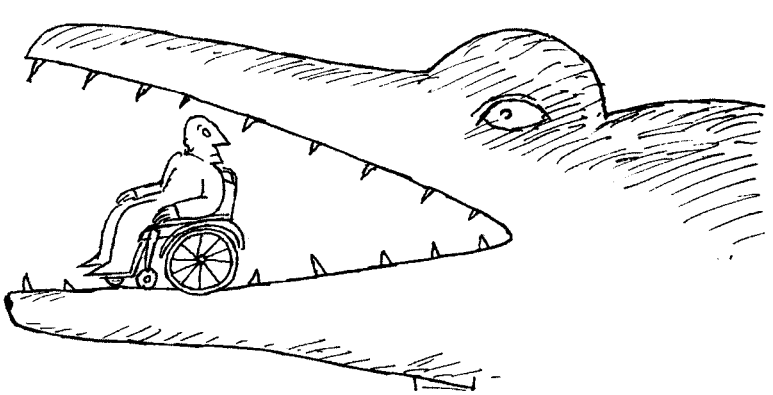
The voice in this extraordinary memoir is more than companionable, it is authentic and unsparing in its honesty. It is tough, sometimes touched with humor, always moving, and ultimately uplifting. But Price presents no facile consolation or platitudinous account of how good people should respond to bad things. Rather, he writes, "The skirmish felt like total war."

With little fanfare, he guides his readers through each battle in the war, medical and personal, from his first surgery which revealed one of the deadliest forms of cancer, a tumor of the spinal column too intricately braided in the core of the spinal cord to permit more than the taking of a sample of tissues, to the debilitating effects of radiation therapy, which left him a paraplegic, to three more rounds of surgery in four years. He expresses high praise for the help and support of nurses, physical therapists, family, and friends throughout his four-year battle. "From all my stays I recall no nurse, woman or man, who was less than helpful. My strongest memories though are the calm black women who'd answer my call in predawn hours of a painful stay when I needed help to turn in bed. By something more than accidental grace these women were able to blend their professional code with the oldest natural code of all—mere human connection, the simple looks and words that award a suffering creature his or her dignity."

He praises modern medicine in general. But he is critical of many physicians with technical proficiency and "stunted emotions," comfortable working "on machines not sentient creatures." He insists, "We have the right to suggest...a warning on the office door... *Expert technician. Expect no more. The quality of your life and death are your concern.*" Price takes responsibility himself for living—"a shipwrecked lone man building a life." As part of the responsibility, he enters a rehabilitation program which seemed at first a "band of cripples...[who] resembled a swarming Hieronymous Bosch assortment of ludicrous damned souls in high torment." His description of working with them is moving and courageous, "a marooned island of damaged men and women intent on bringing ourselves to a state of repair that would let us visit the mainland again." They learned to lift their bodies, manage their diets, maneuver their wheelchairs, catheterize themselves, and ultimately "to stamp one's way back into life with no favors asked," all of which produced in Price "a heady sense of control and choice."

He was frustrated in efforts to deal with the constant pain his condition brought with it. He was overmedicated so that he could neither function as a person or a writer. But he found help in behavior modification techniques and further relief through hypnosis.

Religious faith sustained him. Indeed, threading through this book is a testament to the power of prayer, which Price called "the first strong prop beneath my own collapse." A religious vision determined his



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strong intent to live even when he saw "doom in doctors' eyes." At no point during the ordeal did he succumb to self-pity, to ask the old inevitable question "*Why me?*"...The only answer, of course, is "*Why not?*"

He saw the person he had been die, and he created a new self—he claims a "better" one. A verse from Deuteronomy guided his choice: "I have set life and death in front of you, blessing and curse. Therefore, choose life...." For Price, "Life has meant steady work." His work is of the kind that calls for steady absorption, something he has been accustomed to since childhood. In *A Common Room*, he writes of choosing an additional motto: "Work makes free." In *A Whole New Life* he suggests an additional motto: "On my own." The two—work and individual responsibility—have molded his new life.

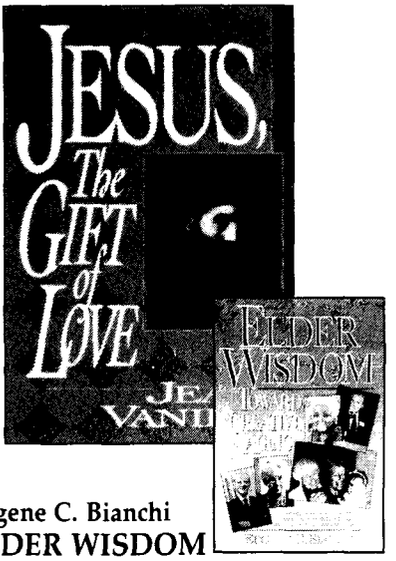
In his powerful and eloquent last chapter, Price advises other patients: "You're in your present calamity alone.... If you want a way out, then dig it yourself....Nobody—least of all no doctor—can rescue you now. Stop asking about the person you used to be and get on with the difficult and critical business of discovering who you'll be tomorrow."

"The kindest thing anyone could have done for me once I'd finished five weeks of radiation would have been to look me square in the eye and say this clearly, 'Reynolds Price is dead. Who will you be now? Who *can* you be and how can you get there—double-time?'"

Price has forged a new life. "If I were called upon to value honestly my present life beside my past—the years from 1933 till '84 against the years after—I'd have to say despite an enjoyable fifty-year start, these recent years since full catastrophe have gone still better. They've brought more in and sent more out—more love and care, more knowledge and patience; more work in less time." In the years since the tumor was found, "I've completed fourteen books—I'd published twelve in the previous twenty-two years."

He concludes: "*I've had a mainly happy life.* I can safely push further. *I've yet to watch another life that seems to have brought more pleasure to its owner than mine has to me.*" And one believes him. □

Invitations... ...Questions Challenges...



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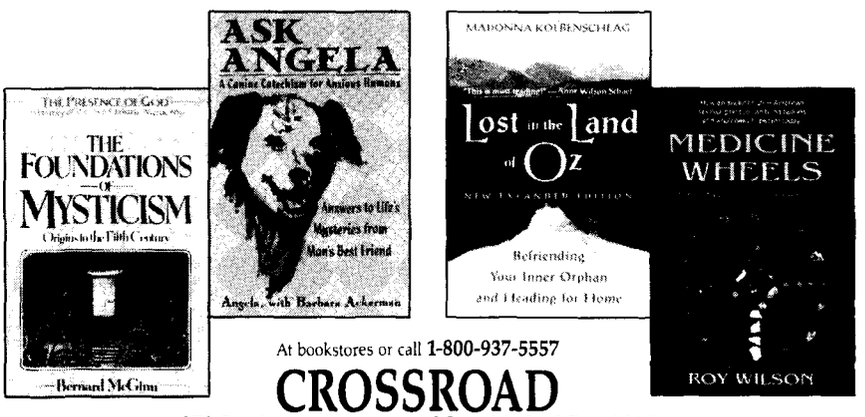
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HEALTH, JUSTICE, COMMUNITY

HEALTH CARE REFORM
A Catholic View
Philip S. Keane
Paulist Press, $14.95, 233 pp.

Christopher F. Koller

Quick—what is the Roman Catholic vision for health-care reform in the United States?

Answers to this question solicited from "experts" or laypeople would lack much unanimity or force, for reasons which include conflicting institutional interests and the complexity of subject matter. However, the need for such a vision is acute. At this writing, Congress continues to dissemble on the subject of health-care reform while the momentum of public opinion wanes in the face of policy minutiae and the prospect of new taxes. Myriad activities continue at the state level—scaled-down versions of the federal debate. And the health-care financing and delivery "industry" continues to restructure itself for those fortunate enough to have the admission ticket of health insurance. Meanwhile, the everyday tragedies and miracles of illness and cure, fear and hope, play themselves out for patients and their families.

Philip Keane has jumped in to fill the void of systematic analysis and advocacy with his book *Health Care Reform: A Catholic View*. Keane is a professor of moral theology at Saint Mary's Seminary and University, of Baltimore, and is a consultant to several Catholic health systems. He takes us on a veritable Cook's tour of Catholic moral theology and social thought, health-care ethics, public-policy analysis, and Christian spirituality. By the conclusion, the reader is left feeling somewhat like a traveler at the end of a long airplane journey: happy to have reached the destination, but not quite sure of the topography covered to get there.

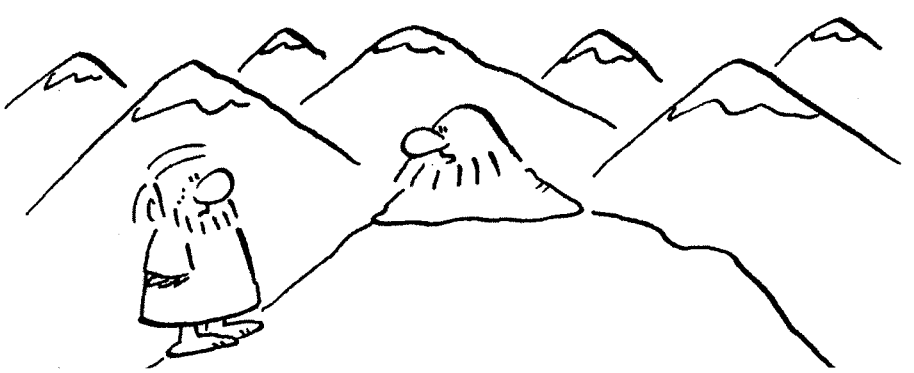
Fortunately, for this reader, the destination is the right one. Keane proposes fifteen "conclusions" for a reformed U.S. health-care system informed by a Catholic vision. Those principles include a single-payer financing system, universal coverage, private delivery systems, an acceptance of death as a part of life, explicit distribution of limited resources (i.e., rationing), and additional attempts to secure access for marginalized members of society.

The essence of the "moral framework" upon which Keane builds rises out of the Catholic notions of community and the moral imperative of distributive justice. Citing Jacques Maritain and more recent work by Charles Curran, Robert Bellah, and others, he attempts to retrieve the notion of the responsible community as the nexus of moral agency and urgency. The ability to provide "similar treatment for similar cases" (a phrase coined by the non-Catholic moral theologian Gene Outka) becomes the gold standard of distributive justice. Individual rights to liberty (non-intervention from a governing body) and responsibility for self-maintenance are subordinate to our need to care for one another. With such a foundation, Keane accomplishes two important tasks. First, he moves the language of reform away from "the right to health care," which inevitably engenders a policy-oriented calculus over exactly what and how much is covered by this "right." Rather, this view argues, the obligation to provide care equitably to all should drive reform efforts.

Second, reinvigorating the language of community shifts the focus from the personal and the societal obsession to prevent, or at least control, death. With this shift, the objective of health care becomes, as Keane quotes a maxim, "Sometimes to cure, often to relieve, and always to console." The dignity of the individual, for a Christian, springs not from one's autonomy, but one's relations to others and a loving God. Such a faith gives comfort in facing the reality of death and personal limits.

Keane could have mounted a stronger Catholic critique of the cultural factors that drive many of the problems of the current system and the inadequacies of certain reform proposals. Individual greed has corroded much of what passes for medical care—from questionable surgeries to the growth in new technologies and pharmaceuticals. Our society's obeisance to a notion of individual autonomy which trumps all other concerns has blocked discourse and societal consensus about collective obligations and reasoned limits.

There is little, moreover, in Keane that compels the reader toward the Catholic vision. In part this lack of forcefulness is due to some lax writing and inattentive editing. But the book also bears the weight of its considerable ambitions. Notions of the common good and distributive justice are not introduced until two-thirds of the way through the work. By then, we have looked at the U.S. health-care system, proposals to fix it as well as other systems, and worked our way through the theology of the human person, the ethics of dying, and the roots of concepts of community. A dis-



"The pay is okay, but I'm afraid our only health plan is reincarnation."

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cussion of Catholic values in a secular world and of levels of cooperation with evil still lies ahead.

Any attempt to cover a terrain so broad, no matter how systematic in intent, will be idiosyncratic in nature. A more selective focus on the foundations of his reform "conclusions" would have sacrificed Keane's desires for comprehensiveness, but permitted fuller discussion of principles such as distributive justice. His exploration of this question is unfortunately truncated. In addition, elaboration on what makes his foundational concepts distinctively Catholic would be illuminating. Finally, had the author chosen to forgo his systematic approach, he could have introduced more narrative, allowing him to reflect and apply his principles and "conclusions" to specific cases.

Is it necessary to be compelled by moral theological reflection when it comes to health care? In this case, yes. Only a morally forceful argument can bore into what we are truly trying to reform in U.S. health care. Our system of financing and delivering care may only be a symptom of the disease. Although any system that consumes almost 15 percent of every dollar produced and still leaves a quarter of the population without adequate coverage and the rest less healthy on average than the citizens of other industrialized countries is worthy of our attention. Rather, a Catholic vision for health-care reform should attempt to reform the way we look at ourselves—in sickness, in health, in life, and in death. And the vision must be persuasive. A strong Catholic voice is needed to help inform a debate shaped by powerful interests of self-preservation, to give voice to those unable to participate in the community to which, as Keane points out, we all belong. □

REVIEWERS

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CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 2)

Dear me, I wondered at first why he was bringing Ronald Reagan and Oliver North into the abortion debate, and then it dawned on me that he was only dittoing Rush Limbaugh's "femi-Nazi" argument by referring to Hitler and Goebbels. Apart from the rank hatred exhibited, a problem with that argument is that when Hitler came to power one of the first acts of the new government was to outlaw abortions in the Third Reich.

My educated guess is that Limbaugh knows better, and is just rewriting history to bolster his right-wing agenda. I'll give Mr. Carlin the benefit of the doubt, and assume his excuse could be ignorance.

RAY E. INGRAM

We fund abortions now

Fremont, Mich.

To the Editors: David R. Carlin, Jr., decries the injustice of making Catholics help pay for abortions through the use of their tax dollars. This has been the cornerstone position of most Catholic commentators, but the argument ignores the reality that the insurance premiums of millions of Catholics are being used right now to fund abortions. Many, if not most, of the existing private health insurance plans offered today include abortion in their coverage. It can be argued that these are not tax dollars but, on a moral level, I would argue that this is a distinction without a difference.

Under the original Clinton health-care plan, as I understand it, every person was to be offered a choice among several health-care plans. If Catholics could use this provision as a reason for setting up health-care plans that would not fund abortions, they would have a real choice.

RAYMOND H. HOFFMAN

Neighborhood memories

Waterford, Conn.

To the Editors: Liz McCloskey's column, "Neighbors Need Neighbors" [April 22] brought me a happy recall of days long

gone "in the old neighborhood."

Growing up in a multi-ethnic neighborhood in Stamford, Connecticut—where all the ladies met at the clothesline and chatted over a real backyard fence, where all the kids played kick-the-can in the street, and where Morris Plotnick, our fruit-and-vegetable man, drove through in his converted bus three times a week—was probably the best of times. We, too, could observe all the activity from our front porches (stoops); we had backyard picnics, friends whose doors were never locked. Today the "warm glow" she mentions is only a sweet memory for so many of us, living as we do in neighborhoods where a distant wave from a passing car once or twice a year is worth mentioning at the dinner table—"I think the guy next door waved at me today."

HELEN KANE

Burkhart got it right

Stone Park, Ill.

To the Editors: On reading Marian Burkhart's article "In the Paraclete I Trust" [May 6], I knew she could not have written so magnificently without help; it had to come from the Spirit. Pious exaggeration, I know; yet what Ms. Burkhart wrote rang evangelically true. To ordain women or not: a labyrinthine question tormenting so many—but not Ms. Burkhart; she'll leave it to the Paraclete. I like that. She spoke not as a woman but as a Christian and a human being when she refused to engage in the politically correct castigating of the patriarchal church and its male leaders:

"The hierarchy may be made up of patriarchs, but they are Christian patriarchs, and Christianity modifies patriarchy.... If it is God's will that women be priests, in the fullness of God's time, they will be, and they will be ordained under the aegis of the Roman hierarchy. Not because the

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hierarchy is made up of patriarchs, for patriarchs qua patriarchs are no more likely to rethink customs that put them in the catbird seat than are—well—matriarchs. But these men are Christians who in the light of the Holy Ghost meditate upon Mary and read Galatians."

With people like Ms. Burkhart writing, there's still hope for us.

GINO DALPIAZ, C.S.

Burkhart got it wrong

Astoria, N.Y.

To the Editors: Regarding women's ordination, a complex issue, Marian Burkhart is unrealistically trusting in the capacity of religious "gatekeepers" to do justice. She makes no demand for full discussion, currently resisted and feared by the hierarchy. Her passive faith in a happy ending recalls the comment by Karl Marx, so often quoted in incomplete form: "Religion is the opium of the people.... *if the prophetic voice is suppressed.*"

Unfortunately the term "false consciousness," little understood in America, is applicable to Ms. Burkhart's maxim: "Wait and see! There is a heaven! I believe in it!" Please, editors, let not the prophetic voice be mute. PAUL LEE

Learning from gays

Brooklyn, N.Y.

To the Editors: I hasten to applaud Sidney Callahan ["Why I Changed My Mind," April 22] and to say how much I appreciate her carefully chosen words. I was deeply touched by her conclusionary words: "Oh Christ, if we could only take your words to heart and learn what defiles a person and what doesn't." Just what I've always wanted, an informed heart.

Her column led to thoughts about the argument that gay marriage would endanger the institution of heterosexual marriage. First, the list of threats to modern Christian marriage is so long that gay marriage should rank about twenty-fourth, even for those who take it seriously.

Second, it seems to me, as wife and mother, that it may be the most committed of hearts that would enter and stay in a marriage as a one-to-one relationship. I admire the courage of the homosexual person giving him/her self to one person, one body, one heart and to a lifelong struggle to understand and support that other. It's a promise that draws, from me, at least, respect and awe.

And I suspect that such marriages could teach us a lot in terms of realizing the ideal of true friendship. It's interesting that the challenge of women on ordination has brought forth a fresh new look at what priesthood means; so the challenge of gay couples to be included in the institution of marriage promises a new look at what marriage means. Sexuality seems to be a good clue in the search for our real selves. Now, there's a thought! JOAN SEXTON

Ireland & the church

Mount Airy, Md.

To the Editors: Reading Ruth O'Halloran's article ["How Catholic Are the Irish?" March 11], I was more than a little surprised by her obvious lack of knowledge of Irish history. She says that a new generation has grown up which "has no recollection of colonial status." It seems Ms. O'Halloran herself has little recollection. As an Irish citizen and teacher of Irish history, let me recall some facts.

The Catholic church was never traditionally on the side of nationalism in Ireland. Throughout the nineteenth century the church forbade its members to join any of the nationalist movements, including the Irish Republican Brotherhood and the Fenians. Pope Leo XIII in 1888 ordered the Irish bishops to keep their people out of the Home Rule movement and the boycotting campaign organized by Charles Stewart Parnell, the great Protestant nationalist statesman whom the church helped pull down. The bishops saw greater opportunities for themselves within the United Kingdom, so that today in Ireland many historians view the church as just a second colonial power; in the words of James Joyce, "we have served two foreign masters, an Englishman and a Roman."

The anger Ms. O'Halloran observes in the Irish press and elsewhere in Irish society stems in part from the years of censorship instigated by the church, starting with the censorship bill of 1928 and leading to the banning of books by Faulkner, Hemingway, Somerset Maugham, Sigmund Freud, among other foreign authors, and of practically every native Irish writer of renown.

I don't agree that all this has been forgotten.

Finally, it is unfair of Ms. O'Halloran to say that Bishop Eamonn Casey was given no opportunity to tell his side of the story [about his relationship with Annie Murphy]. Part of the problem was that he would not speak despite many requests. He simply left the country under cover before the scandal broke. CARMEL Mc CAFFREY

Pedophilia's victims

San Francisco, Calif.

To the Editors: I read Father John J. Dreese's article on "The Other Victims of Priest Pedophilia" [April 22] with the deepest sympathy, for I share the shame and anger he expressed so well. This is my thirty-fifth year of ordination, so we are nearly contemporaries. But my thoughts come from a life spent almost equally on both sides of the clerical chasm in the church, from my experience as the father of two sons and a daughter, and from my familiarity with both canon law and civil law. It is out of these perspectives that I respond.

First, it is not true that under the 1917 Code of Canon Law bishops or religious superiors could do nothing to rid the church of clerical child molesters. The most serious ecclesiastical penalties, all involving excommunication and *privatio officii et beneficii*, were available to exclude from the faithful the perpetrators of grave sexual crimes. There were sanctions and there were procedures for imposing them. It is simply not true that the bishops were powerless to rid the church of a cleric who could destroy a child's faith or personal integrity.

Misuse of current canons is ironic; in the case of priests who marry, the laws are used in some dioceses to justify depriving them not only of ministry but also of long years of accrued pension and health-care benefits; at the same time the laws are interpreted to "require" bishops to

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provide lifetime sustenance to known criminals totally unfit for the ministry. Such uses of the law masked a desire to save the cleric that superseded the will to save his victim. Case law reveals that juries have so found.

Why was the revulsion of parents against pedophiles not shared by the hierarchy and translated into canonical impediments to exclude these persons from continuing ministry in the church? Why, when sent to the Servants of the Paraclete in New Mexico for psychological treatment, were known sex offenders given faculties for weekend work? The problem was that church leaders a generation ago did not have the will to do it, because they did not fully realize why the crime was so terrible, either for its victims or for the church.

And why not? No doubt our bishops had much to learn about sexual aberrations and sexual crimes, as did we all. Still, it's not the case that the gravity of sexual abuse of children was unknown until our own enlightened times: In criminal law, it has always ranked as a serious felony. I suggest that there were other factors that tended to keep church administrators (the bishops) from looking squarely at the problem. One was the power of sacerdotal bonding, rather stronger than the clubby mentality of the United States Senate. Another had to do with civil law.

In the 1960s the church shared with nonprofit public benefit organizations generally the shield of charitable immunity. This immunity was guaranteed both by the courts and, tacitly, by the legal profession, the police, and the press. Awards of punitive damages against religious organizations were virtually unknown; so also theories of corporate, vicarious liability, damages for emotional and psychic injury. Thus, personnel decisions within the church could be made almost entirely in confidence and without civil consequence. So it was that events that we now know were taking their toll in human lives were kept secret.

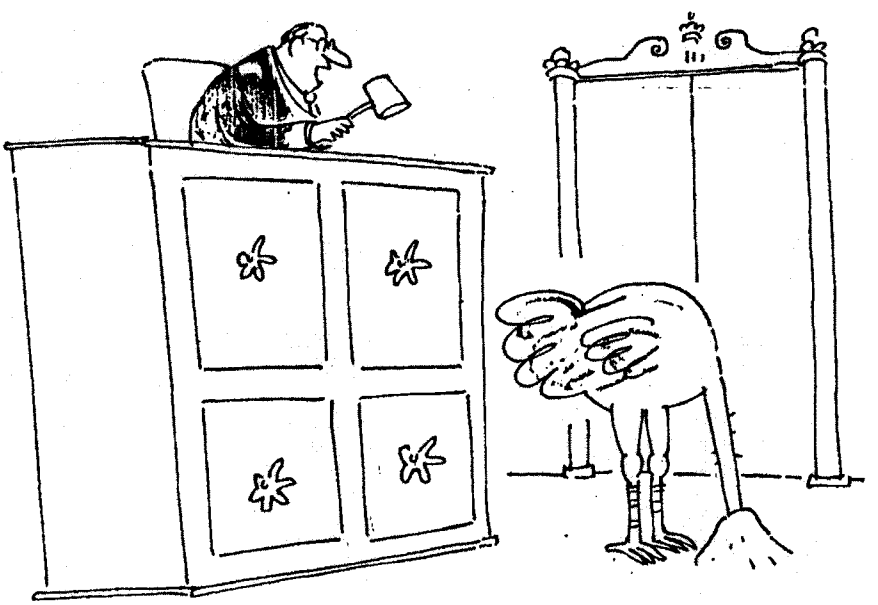
Today all this has changed. Churches have been stripped of their civil immunities. Had the parents of the raped children of North Attleboro twenty years ago sought immediate prosecution of the marauding cleric, had they been able to join the bishop to the case on grounds of negligent supervision, and had they won widely publicized and very expensive lawsuits, you can be assured that the hierarchy would have found a way to rid the church of the miscreants immediately. There would have been no stalling, no stonewalling of discovery, no exercises in ambiguity and evasion—tactics that wound up costing the church in America nearly half a billion dollars.

After affirming once more that I do genuinely share Father Dreese's sense of having been hurt and betrayed by the pedophiles, I must add that I see the focus of his article still upon the pedophile and his bishop, and not upon the victims, or upon the mothers and fathers in the church who live with the agony of their spiritually devastated children. When this suffering is given priority, our heaviest emphasis should be given to the question of accountability.

Before blaming the men and women who sit on juries for overcompensation of victims, Father Dreese should sit through a criminal or civil trial of a child abuser, or carefully read the transcript of such a trial. Juries decide what they perceive to be true about the seriousness of the injury caused, who caused it, who knew of it and allowed it to continue. These cases are not frivolous; the evidence is not of peccadillos but of dreadful crimes. Settlements are approved by bishops who have been apprised of the evidence. (It is noteworthy that to date appellate review has not produced significant reversals.)

Father Dreese's lament against the press has been widely articulated. The remedy, however, is not a new immunity. Had the bishops known some decades ago that their decisions in these matters would one day be made public, they would have proved better shepherds. In the church as elsewhere, publicity and massive money losses provide powerful incentives toward making proper management decisions. As I see it, the best risk management for the church is an administration that is open, more fully participatory, even-handed, and sensitive to the needs and expectations of all the persons we touch (with due regard for confidentiality).

With Father Dreese, we are all appalled by the vast loss of money and resources. I must, however, ask a clearer focus upon the cause. The cost of criminal prosecutions of pedophiles has been borne by the taxpayers. No bishop in this country has yet been found guilty of aiding and abetting or criminal shielding of a child molester. What is in question is not malfeasance but nonfeasance: failure



"The court sentences you to twenty days with your head out of the sand."

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of an administrator to do what common sense and minimal ethical standards require. Church costs incurred in these criminal cases, mostly involving fees for professional advice, have been modest—though, of course, scandal to the faithful has been felt in lowered church contributions.

It is in civil litigation, where litigants themselves must bear the costs, that significant awards against the church have been obtained. Why? There would be little or no civil litigation if molester and bishop could be reached only in their personal capacities; as a rule both would be judgment-proof (i.e., unable to pay substantial judgments). Suits seek damages from corporations for what has been done in representative roles; that is what *respondeat superior* is all about. Where corporate liability has been found in lawsuits against the church, the findings were facilitated by evidence from canon law of a theology of the clerical state that justifies not just exclusive teaching and sacramental roles for the bishop but, more importantly, absolute jurisdiction over the administration of church properties. Such ubiquitous and constant empowerment allows the case law to see in the perpetration of crimes by clerics a representation of authority. Please note also that in all these successful civil actions, cases were won not by the first victim but by subsequent victims who could prove that superiors knew of the pattern of crime against others and did not take reasonable steps to protect them. In cases where bishops were found not to have been negligent, defense costs have been relatively small.

Perhaps most importantly, in reading the record of facts in these cases we need to shift our attention to a scarcely mentioned realization that the stories of the child victims and their parents often fell upon almost totally insensitive ears. The difference between 1964 and 1994 is less in the perceived organic chemistry of sexual abusers, given much stress by Father Dreese, than it is in today's general awareness that the child victim may be almost totally destroyed as a human being by the traumas inflicted upon him by the trusted, sacred marauder. The deep psychic destruction is not a forgettable life experience, a transitioning incident prematurely ending puberty. Administrators whose attention was focused upon burgeoning institutions could fail to grasp the seriousness of all this, a failure that would lead to skewed priorities.

Look at the case records: letters sent to parents, police admonished to retain confidence, priests called in, chewed out—and reassigned. Parents are summoned to the bishop's office, interrogated there by the diocesan authorities, urged not to contact lawyers or the courts. Then comes the record of silence as the pastors hope the problem goes away. Parents and their spiritually ruined children fall away from the church. In none of the cases in which corporate civil liability has been found did the bishop rush to the aid of the child and the family, secure medical and psychological help, immediately report the crime to the police, and then take decisive action to dismiss the priest. Had these things been done, the image of the priesthood and the reputations of good and innocent priests could have been saved. It may be that the committees and guidelines that have been created to address the problem as it recurs in the future will prevent similar harm. One may hope that the genesis of the new policies was not in the cautionary advice of lawyers employed to avoid corporate liability but rather in a really new sensitivity to the evil of the sin or the false accusation of it.

To conclude: Father Dreese has indeed been hurt and betrayed. There are thousands of priests like him, and like me, and millions of lay men and women who share his dismay. In addition to what has been said above, a significant lesson from these sad episodes is that the laity in most church jurisdictions still have no significant decision-making role in personnel management. Solitary leaders still seek affirmation along ascending lines and need not, really, listen to the laity at all, not on matters of personal morality, not even in the agony of sexual victimhood. Voices that can be heard only in court or in exit polls from a thoroughly autocratic church may one day demand discovery of decisional evidence of why parishioners were never consulted on the appointment of pastors, donors on the closing of churches, the faithful on the choice of civil corporate structures of centralized, unaccountable control, men and women on the natural understanding and delicate individuality of their sexuality. Those who are most vulnerable and those who care the most will have to be heard before the church can be healed.

WILLIAM W. BASSETT

The writer, a professor at the school of law, University of San Francisco, taught canon law at the Catholic University for eight years.

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How green was my kitchen

ROSEMARY DEEN

We need to sense green life. Especially in the winter. When I come home from my evening class then, I pause by the kitchen counter at my collection of small plants under a long plant light. I set my book bag down and gaze at the button fern, refined and sturdy, the maidenhair uncoiling green curls from its satisfying, wirey black stem. In a homemade Wardian case the leaf of a fancy begonia sprouts tiny new plants from each cut in the leaf vein.

But it isn't wonders that keep me there; it's simply the sensation of green. I feel it in some somatic core, as you feel clear water quench a serious thirst. "What have you been doing in the kitchen for the past hour?" says Leonard Deen when I come into the living room. "An hour?" I'm surprised. "I was just looking at the plants."

Leisurely summer weeding gives the same pleasure of purely touching green. You go out to some morning-shaded spot, perhaps with your morning cup in hand. A few weeds have got a nice green start, and you sit down to pull them out, one by one: root—hairy and delicate, still clinging to the good soil—stem, and greeny leaves. The oriole keeps up his always-incomplete assertion. You're down in the green, tranquil and balanced. What you do will not be undone in the next twenty minutes. The weed green passes into your hands and into your soma.

The plants you free gain ground and their own greenness. They articulate themselves more, up there in the light; but you're enjoying the dumbness of the simple, single green. You are one with the weeds not with your plants now. It's a dialectical oneness, of course, because you're sorting out and throwing away: "This is true; this is not true." But it's the dialectics of poise not of struggle or heroism. You're not laboring at something to get it over with, but acting on each part with the energizing patience of green.

Of course there are nongreen places in the great world, where sky and air are everything, or rock and height. And there are greener worlds than mine which may be almost enough to satisfy the need for green. Once in the south of England, during a June vacation of almost constant rain, Leonard and I found ourselves back of Winchester Cathedral looking at a sign that said, "Water meadow walk to Saint Cross. One mile." Until we saw the sign we hadn't known we wanted to go to Saint Cross, whatever that was. The usual gentle rain was falling. We set out along a single-person path beside a small stream flowing clearly over light brown gravel through what was presumably the water meadow. The grass was over our heads. It was a world of never-ending grass; all the cattle of the sun couldn't have consumed it. There was no one about, and no other world than this.

The stream gradually grew a little bigger, supported a few water fowl and a few fish. Our feet wet on the path, our heads wet in the green watery air, it was hard to tell the one water from the other. The green of the water grasses seemed simply expressed into the green rain above them. Leonard realized this was the Itchen, whose stained-glass image we had just seen in the Silksteed chapel with Isaak Walton sitting pensively by the banks where we walked now. Occasionally we saw a house with its own small bridge over the stream and its own locked bridge gate—though the stream was hardly a barrier and could be stepped across easily. The houses appeared remote in the watery air, but in the garden of one I saw a woman with an umbrella picking lettuces.

Saint Cross turned out to be an old, small, empty monastery. Its attendant asked us whether we required bread and ale after our journey, as he was bound to give it to travelers who asked for it. "Do you really give it?" I asked. "Do you ask for it?" he replied. We hadn't the temerity to ask. We wandered through old rooms. There were a few tools and kitchen implements, but mostly the rooms were filled simply with Corot light, watery and clear. When we left, the attendant was gone, but I noticed a sign on the desk which said his name was Mr. Heaven. Then we went back through the green water meadow as we had come. In the train on the way back to London, as I got out the extra pair of dry socks I always carried in England, I felt it had been a satisfying day.

Green, as it happens, is my most unfavorite color. I mean the green one is offered in wall paint, rugs, sofas, and dress goods. It discomforts me. Leonard pretends to find this amusing as he sees me come in from one of my watering forays into the tomato plants growing higher than my head. "If green is your most unfavorite color, then why are there leaves growing in your hair?" he says, plucking them out and placing them greenly in my hand. □

Rosemary Deen teaches at Queens College. She has a green thumb and is Commonweal*'s poetry editor.*

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